

U Razak of Burma:

A Teacher, a Leader, a Martyr



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PREFACE

As a primary school student, I read about *Sayagyi* (a great teacher or a principal) U Razak and fellow martyrs in school textbooks and in remembrance booklets of Martyrs' Day, (19th July, 1947), the day he was assassinated along with U Aung San and seven other cabinet members and colleagues. Later in my twenties and thirties, I read the few available writings by U Razak, and articles written about him by his former students, and talked with people who knew him well.

From this exposure, I learned about U Razak's deep love for Burma, his courage to fight for our country's independence, his respect for diversity, his desire for unity and his far-sighted wisdom. As a leader, his vision carried beyond our country and highlighted the principles of humanity, integrity, knowledge, courage, freedom and peace. The points U Razak, as Burma's Minister for Education and National Planning, emphasized in his 1947 speech at the First South East Asian Regional Conference of International Student Service in Madras, India, are still valid if not more pronounced in 2007. In times of intolerance and divisiveness, such as today, his vision and gentle yet persistent approach sought to unite diverse groups through education for the common goal of freedom and development should be referenced and explored further as we seek practical actions for long-lasting peace, security and prosperity.

Writings in English about Burma and related to U Razak usually say something along the lines of, 'Razak, a Muslim politician'. That is not an incorrect description, but alone it does not do justice to the rich contribution U Razak made to our country and to future generations. To be fair to the existing literature, "The Muslims of Burma"¹ by Moshe Yegar mentioned U Razak's recognized roles in Burma. As a student of history, I wished that more information about U Razak, his fellow leaders and their collective vision could be made available in the English language so that international readers would know more about our country's respected leaders, their struggles and visions. Some people, both inside and outside Burma, shared my wish but, until now, nobody had the time or resources to make it a reality.

Fortunately, in this collection, one speech and one article by Sayagyi U Razak are available in English, just as he wrote them. Dr. Nyi Nyi kindly wrote a tribute as a brief background information of U Razak, and ten of the 28 articles in the book “Sayagyi U Razak as Retold by his Pupils” (published in 1995 in Burmese as a remembrance of the 75th Anniversary of the National Day) have been translated into English and edited by two anonymous scholars, both fluent in English and Burmese language. Permission to use these articles for this collection has been granted graciously. All contributors have given their time, expertise and services voluntarily. This booklet is a collective effort to share U Razak’s thoughts and actions with international readers. This is not a complete collection of articles of/on U Razak by any means but just a small sample of articles and speeches. I take responsibility for any shortcomings in this booklet but all credit belongs to the writers and translators.

I never had the privilege to meet and know U Razak as my grandfather. I only know him as one of our country’s leaders who dedicated his life for Burma’s independence. Although I am honored to be a descendant of U Razak, I am even more proud as a Burmese whose country had such visionary and capable leaders who trail-blazed a path for our country’s freedom and peace. Revisiting contributions from past leaders is not going to bring any positive change for democracy in the current political climate both inside and outside Burma. However, I believe that we should learn from the past, live in the present with our best efforts, and strive together for the future of Burma to be a democratic, peaceful, and prosperous country for everyone as our forefathers and foremothers had dreamed and struggled for.

Myat Htoo Razak
July 2007

1 “The Muslim of Burma: A Study of a Minority Group” by Moshe Yegar (a former Second Secretary of the Embassy of Israel in Rangoon, Burma, in the 1960s) published in 1972 (Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden) as a part of his M.A. thesis to Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

SAYAGYI U RAZAK
A Patriot, A Visionary & A Dedicated Teacher

By Nyi Nyi *
B.Sc.(Hons),, Ph.D.(London). D.I.C.

Six decades ago, we lost our beloved leader Bogyoke Aung San and his close colleagues in the assassination on 19 July 1947. It deprived the nation of a corps of leaders who would have provided wise and strong leadership in newly independent Burma in various spheres of life. Starting with the turmoil soon after independence, the impact of the loss is still being felt today. It was a tragic loss to the families, the nation and its citizens.

As a fellow educationist, I would like to write on the grievous loss of Sayagyi U Razak, a selfless patriot, a visionary of the future needs of the country and a dedicated teacher of repute who made the ultimate sacrifice together with Bogyoke Aung San. As the Principal (in those days known as Superintendent) of the Central National High School of Mandalay, he trained and nurtured generations of students to be patriotic, to love, appreciate and be proud of being a Burmese and proficient and excel in the areas of study they pursued. His school produced the greatest number of national and local leaders (including several Cabinet ministers), civil and military leaders, diplomats, scientists, sportsmen, artists, writers and journalists. To parents and the community, he was the headmaster of all students in Mandalay and Upper Burma/Myanmar. During the Resistance, in which he participated, he was unanimously elected president of the Mandalay Division of the Anti-Fascist Organisation (A.F.O.) and also later of the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (A.F.P.F.L.), its successor national front.

Some western writers referred to him as a muslim politician. While it is true that he was a muslim, it would be more appropriate to describe him as a national and regional leader whose faith was Islam.

Bogyoke Aung San was a secularist leader and he chose his team

based on merit, regional representation and experience. He regarded religion as a private faith and he did not, for example, include any Christian or Hindu leaders in his cabinet. He did not adopt Buddhism as a state religion despite the urging by some leaders, but as a religion practised by the majority of the people. Sayagyi was, in fact, proposed for inclusion in the cabinet as the representative of Upper Burma/Myanmar by the Buddhist sanghas of Mandalay.

Sayagyi was a secularist but felt young people need to respect and learn their religion and its teaching for its moral values and also as part of the national culture.

Every morning, he would make rounds of the school, after school assembly to ensure that all Buddhist students attend their prayers and religious lessons. Mandalay is, of course, the epicenter of the Buddhist faith and most students were Buddhists. Parents and later students themselves when they grew older, appreciated Sayagyi's stewardship in giving them their cultural roots.

U Razak, born in Mandalay in 1898 was popularly known as "Sayagyi" in Mandalay and Upper Burma/Myanmar. His mother was Daw Nyein Hla, a Burmese Buddhist from Meikhtila and his father, Mr Sheik Abdul Rahman (also known as U Tun) was an Inspector of Police. His brothers (U Ba Kyu, U Ba Kyaw, U Ba Mu and U Ba Than) and sisters (Daw Yan and Daw Thein Thein) were all Buddhists. He retained his foreign-sounding name, Razak, on the advice of his mentors that there was nothing wrong in retaining the name honouring his father.

Despite being in Senior B.A. class in Rangoon (and later University) College in 1920, on the verge of graduation, he joined the University Strike of 1920 as the students' demand for alleviating the restrictions imposed by the new University was rejected by the authorities. While the nationalist leaders felt the need for more highly-educated people in the country to meet the growing needs and also to prepare for the home rule of the country, the authorities were; promoting an elitist approach, placing several hurdles including the prohibitive cost due to

the compulsory requirement of all students to stay in the hostels, thus limiting each year's intake.

He refused the offer of the government after the strike to join the police force at a senior level. Instead, he completed his formal degree at the National University and joined the newly-emerged national education movement whose schools could not even pay the salary regularly. But the movement enabled more students to be enrolled, and it reinvigorated Burmese/Myanmar studies, promoted Burmese/Myanmar culture and instilled patriotism and nationalism to all its students, making them to be proud to be Burmese/Myanmar again. He became the Principal and a teacher of Mandalay Central National High School, one of the two biggest national schools in the country.

He taught English and Pali, the classical language of Buddhism. Recognising the importance of English in colonial times and when the country attain its independence, and also to refute the reputation that national schools were weak in English, he enacted a rule that all students must spoke in English except in the Burmese/Myanmar and Pali classes. His knowledge of Pali was also profound and came in useful during the Second World War when he could explain the young novices and monks in Mingun studying the Buddhist scriptures of what they were learning as Sayagyi and his family took refuge in a monastery in Mingun.

Sayagyi also believed in the need for a well-rounded education, promoting the physical development of the young people - his favourite sports being boxing, nurturing the future champion, Tiger Ba Nyein amongst others. He also established a boxing club and hired a professional coach to teach the techniques of boxing and sportsmanship systematically as one of his ambitions was to train his students to fight against the authority figures (like police, military, etc.) in the arena of a boxing ring – instilling the spirit of standing up against the authorities when required, and the practice of a fair fight.

He also founded the Yedat, a volunteer corps for paramilitary training in preparation for a future armed struggle for national liberation. It was

an inspiring sight to watch him in uniform leading his corps in parades. His students were later found to be at the core of successive military establishments, such as BIA: Burma Independence Army, BDA: Burma Defence Army and BNA : Burma National Army .They also provided the leadership in the Resistance in many areas in Upper Burma/Myanmar against the Japanese later.

A major achievement during his short tenure as the Minister of Education was to lay the foundation and start the process of establishing a future University in Mandalay. He entrusted the project to U Ko Lay, the future Vice-Chancellor of the University of Mandalay to start higher learning in Mandalay without further delay even if not all the bricks were in place. He adopted the principle of not allowing " the best be the enemy of the good", Sayagyi U Razak and Sayagyi U Ko Lay were the two architects of the first University for Upper Burma/Myanmar, providing access to higher learning to the northern half of the country with its roots in Mandalay, the centre of national culture.

Sayagyi was loved and respected by his students, their parents and the community as a whole. They loved him for his integrity and sacrifice, fairness and generosity, kindness and care, foresight and leadership, and inspiration. And not least, they also remember the cane to instill discipline. I was with Dr Kaung Zan, one of Sayagyi's students, in London in the 1950's doing our graduate work in the same college, Imperial College of Science and Technology (at the time, medicine had not yet been added). Dr Kaung Zan was doing research in plant pathology and he became Chief Agricultural Research Officer in Burma/Myanmar. He later joined the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines, serving in several duty stations around the world. Whenever we reminisced in the college about our younger days, two persons would invariably dominate his observations, Sayagyi and his (Dr Kaung Zan's) future wife, Thet Thet. He attributed his achievements to the training and discipline instilled by his Sayagyi.

Sayagyi was a leader of man with a vision for the future. He foresaw what would be needed in a newly independent country and started preparing its young people for it. Alas, the good die young. He was only 49 when he died.

* The author is former Professor of Geology, Director of Universities, Permanent Secretary of Education, Deputy Minister of Education, Minister of Mines and Ambassador to Australia and New Zealand. He later joined UNICEF as its Director of Programmes. On his retirement, he served as Clinical Professor of Public Health in the Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine and also as a member of the Board of Directors in several international non-profit organizations.



FREEDOM MOVEMENTS AS PEACE MOVEMENTS

By Honorable U Razak *

I come from a land where a people, happy in their independence, not seriously interrupted since the dawn of history, lost their sovereignty 61 years ago and have been striving ever since to regain it. We are all now meeting in a great country whose sovereignty has likewise been expropriated, though a longer time than Burma, and which at least is on the eve of freedom and independence after a fight lasting through many decades and after the people had undergone immeasurable physical and mental suffering in the cause of freedom. In the great non-Co-operation Movement inaugurated by Mahatama Gandhi in 1930, thousands of men and women and even children suffered assault and imprisonment for the cause of freedom, and since then the undaunted Indian people have been fighting incessantly for their freedom till at last their cause is won.

Elsewhere in the East, we see the same struggle with varying success and at different stages. In my own country, Burma, fortunately, we like India, are on the verge of success. The Philippines have gained their independence, Indonesia is nearing success. French Indo China is in the throes of armed revolt, while Korea, after years of suffering under the Japanese, has been divided under the guardianship of the United States and Russia, through there is hope for her ultimate independence. Further West, we see Egypt striving to shake off the last bonds of subjugation to a western power, while Madagascar is in the throes of revolt and the call for freedom is moving the minds and hearts of the subject countries of north Africa.

Almost everywhere, the fight for freedom seems to evoke violence – violence certainly on the part of the conqueror to conserve his illegal gains and to stem the tide of revolt, and violence also on the part of the conquered and the subdued to regain the freedom which is man's birthright. Everywhere, history has proved that the conquest of one country by another, saving the rare exception where the conquering race has merged with the conquered to form a new nation, means an unstable equilibrium, leading sooner or later to bloodshed and wars of revolt, for

the instinct of freedom is the truest and deepest of human instincts. The Tartar conquest of Eastern Europe, the Ottoman conquest, the conquest of Spain and Portugal by the Moors and the subjugation of the Netherlands by Spain all led in the end to violent revolt.

It is a terrible blot on the history of mankind that nations should seek to enslave nations and that the conscience of the world should have permitted for so many centuries the subjugation of one country by another the reduction of the conquered to the status of slaves. In later days, the partial awakening of the conscience of the world prevented conquered peoples from actually becoming slaves but they were nevertheless enslaved mentally and economically in spite of whatever degree of personal freedom they may have been permitted to enjoy by the conquering power.

It took two great world wars totally to awake the conscience of the world. What was the cause of the First World War? You may say that it was the murder of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand at Sarajevo in 1914, or give away of the other proximate causes. The real cause, of course, was the system of territorial conquests which the nations of Europe permitted themselves at the expense of other parts of the world. Overpopulated Europe sought space in other lands. The great sea-faring race, the Portuguese, founded an empire; Spain also founded a great empire which she afterwards lost because gold from the Americas made it unnecessary for her people to work and they degenerated in consequence. The Dutch founded a great empire which still remains under contest in the two thousand islands of the East Indies. The French and the English fought for supremacy in India and the French, expelled from India except for a few towns, went further east to found an empire in Indo-China. The British were somewhat late as empire builders but nevertheless founded the greatest empire which the world has ever seen now contacting with the independence nearly attained by India and Burma. China escaped because the western powers could not agree on the division of the spoils. Africa the western powers divided among themselves and even the last surviving country, Abyssinia, fell ultimately under the yoke of Italy from which she has happily now been released. Germany was a late comer in the conquest for empire because until comparatively recently she was a collection of

numerous states. With her consolidation into an empire by Bismarck, she joined in the race for colonial possessions but found herself too late except in Africa and even there she received only a small share. Italy, another late entrant into the game, was also in time only for small slices of Africa. So long as the conscience of the world permits these conquests, the “have-nots” will try to grab shares from the “haves”. The real cause of the First World War was therefore the desire of Germany for expansion and for colonial possessions the hope to conquer all Europe and perhaps in time all the world. The Second World War arose from the same real cause. Germany, being this time impregnated not only by a lust for conquest but also by the Nazi doctrine of the chosen race, Germans believed that they were born to conquer the world and to rule over other countries. Italy, under a Fascist regime, allied herself with Germany to share in the plundering of the world, and the Japanese, another nation impregnated with the doctrine of the chosen race, acted with the same motives in the east. The result of both these wars was terrible human suffering, millions of lives lost, millions maimed, millions starved to death, misery and destruction of wealth from which the world has yet to recover.

Is it not clear from the facts I have recounted that the enslavement of one nation by another, the deprivation of human liberties by conquest, so long as they are permitted by the conscience of the world, must lead to greedy and ambitious nations striving for material power and for armaments in order to be able to conquer and subjugate other nations? If war is to be prevented in the future, it can be done only by the conscience of the world forbidding the enslavement of one country by another. Happily, that conscience is awakening as we see from the enlightened policy of the present government of the United Kingdom and from the impact of world opinion on the action of the Dutch, even on the actions of the French, though the war of liberation in Indo-China is not yet at an end.

Nations which fight for their freedom, as all self-respecting nations must do, are fighting against a condition of affairs which must destroy the prospects of world peace. Stable equilibrium will be attained in the world only when each nation is allowed to rule itself and to manage its

own affairs, but is forbidden to encroach on the liberties of other nations. All subject nations who strive for their liberties are fighting to that end, for the freedom of all nations, for the ultimate happiness of the world and for perpetual peace when every nation is free and is restrained by the opinion of all nations from impinging on the rights and liberties of other nations. The fight for liberty is therefore the fight for peace and it is in this spirit that we now find a new world organization, the United Nations, whose objective is the freedom and self-determination of all nations, the abolition of war and the peaceful settlement of all international disputes by discussion and by arbitration.

What I have said of nations applies also to classes of people. For so long as one class of people dominates other classes, for example, when unbridled capitalism is allowed to exploit unorganized labour, there will be no freedom. It is only when there is class equilibrium, when each class takes its proper share of the profits of industry and disputes are settled by the conciliation and arbitration of impartial tribunals, that in this field also we have hope for peace. Class freedom and equality make for social and industrial peace and for so long as there is exploitation of class by class, it is right for the exploited to fight for their freedom. Here also the fight for freedom is fight for peace, for the ultimate peace that will come when all classes, peoples and individuals are free and unexploited.

Let us from this hall and from this historic conference send a message of hope and greeting to all nations which are fighting for freedom, whether the fight is a moral one or a physical one, and Mahatma Gandhi has proved in India how great a weapon is that of non-violence non-cooperation. However and wherever the fights may be all who fight for their liberties are entitled to the sympathy of the world, for as I have ventured to prove, the fight for liberty is the fight for peace. And like peace, liberty is indivisible. If in the world there remain peoples subject to other peoples, nations enslaved to other nations, classes enslaved to other classes, then the liberty of the world, the liberty of mankind is impaired, and the possibility of universal peace threatened. So, let us from here convey our sympathy for all who are fighting for freedom, and wish them early success, so that the world may the sooner consist only of free and

sovereign nations willing to respect one another's rights and liberties so that there may be just one world, a world of liberty-loving and peace-loving nations, for without liberty there can be no peace.

*** Note:** Speech was published in "Freedom movements, Madras 1947". The First South East Asian Regional Conference, International Student Service. Page 54-58. The above speech was written and given by U Razak at the First South East Asian Regional Conference of International Student Service in Madras, India, on the 11th of June, 1947, as the Minister of Education of Burma. U Razak was the Member-In Charge of the portfolio of Education and National Planning of the cabinet, "Governor's Executive Council of Burma", headed by U Aung San. The cabinet was established in agreement with the British government as the preliminary government on the verge of Burma gaining her independence on the 4th of January, 1948.



THE BURMAN MUSLIM ORGANIZATION

(An account of the formation of
the All Burma Burman Muslim Congress at Pyinmana)

By A. Razak, B.A.

Editor's Note – Mr. Razak, B.A. Principal of the Central National High School, Mandalay, President of the Mandalay District AFPFL, and President of the All Burma Burman Muslim Congress is a very popular man, liked by not only the Burman Muslims but by all communities. He was once of the leaders of the Resistance Movement in Upeer Burma where the AFO was born, and for his anti-fascist activities, Mr. Razak was sentenced by the Nippon Military Court Martial to undergo two years rigorous imprisonment. When the Governor of Burma asked the AFPFL to submit names for the Executive Council, Mr. Razak's name was one of the top-ranking in the list. He is the only Burman Muslim to be in that selection.

Pyinmana was once a busy and populous little town on the railway line between Mandalay and Rangoon. In the year 1946, as a result of the Second World War, the little town is one vast heap of ruins with tall brick walls standing here and there amidst mounds of cinder and ashes.

Although cities have been physically devastated, the spirit of the Burmans not only undaunted, but the restraint and suppression imposed by Fascism awakened in all Burmans the spirit of revolt. The urge for freedom found outlet in the secret anti-Fascist movement. It started very soon after the creation of the puppet government. It is sheer malice to say that the anti-Fascist movement started only after the fall of Mandalay.

In this aspiration for self-expression and self determination, Burman Muslims were one with the Burmans, Burman Muslims had their fair share in the underground movement, in the Burmese National Army and in guerilla units. The country was in travail; the young blood of the Burman Muslims manhood did not bargain for seats in the council or proportional representation on this basis or that principle; they wanted no statutory safeguards; they only knew that Burma was in the throes of a new birth and that they were Burmans

and that they owe their entire allegiance to the Nation.

Very soon after liberation, Burman Muslims living in different parts of the country felt themselves called upon to meet in the conclave and thrash out their aims and chalk out a line of action for their progress along with the rest of the country. Burman Muslims desire to help and not to hamper the momentum of national progress.

Pyinmana thus became the venue of the All Burma Burman Muslim Conference on the 24th, 25th and 26th December, 1945. Considering the unpacified condition of certain districts contiguous to Pyinmana and the facilities for travel where “blinking civilians” were treated with little patience by the all powerful F.T.Os and C.T.Os, the Congress was a tremendous success – delegates from over 33 towns including large village tracts like *Myein* and *Bugyi* in the distant suburb of Shwebo attended the conference.

Apart from the political aspect, the social side of this Burman Muslim rally was both heartening and moving. For some of the delegates, between this meeting at Pyinmana and their last meeting, there had intervened a long and dark period of four years when communication was impossible and irresponsible rumors and unfounded news were rampant. At Pyinmana, friends met friends who were supposed to have been dead. They exchanged news and learnt more about other friends and relations living in different parts of the country.

The delegates on their arrival were first accommodated in a quiet Muslim village known as *Po-Kyay-Ywa* in the distant suburb of Pyinmana in and around a big mosque. In the hall of the madressa of the village Subject Committee meetings of this conference were held. Spirit of good will predominated by love of the nation prevailed throughout, heated discussions, arose but the same good cheer and strong common sense persisted. There never was any occasion for division except once. Here, too, opinion on one side was overwhelming - it was pure cussedness on the part of a certain delegate who turned up late and his solitary supporter that rendered a division necessary. When votes were taken, it was two against the rest of the delegates.

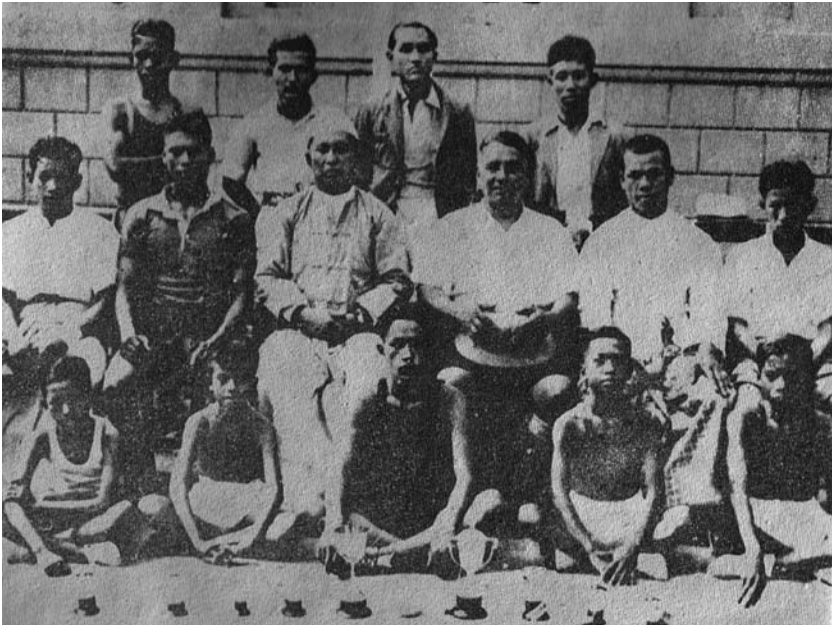
The plenary sessions were held in a specially erected *pandal* (temporary structure or platform) in the city. Here the business proper of the conference was conducted with dignity and good cheer. Sound and well thought out speeches could be heard. Young and old, male and female speakers could be heard, all were determined upon unity – through unity – to achieve solidarity and strength and win the respect of all communities.

Many important and far reaching resolutions were passed. Of these two outstanding are: (1) that all Burman Muslim political associations should become one and (2) that the Burman Muslim Congress now formed should fraternize with the All Burma Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League. The second resolution has come to represent the will of all because the Burman Muslim masses have already merged themselves with the Burman Buddhists in Peasants, Cultivators and Labour Unions.

After three days of busy yet happy and successful meeting, the conference terminated. All the delegates were invited to a tea-party by the Pinyinmana Anti-Fascist League. Scarlet fez caps and dark velvet caps seated side by side with gaung-baungs (traditional headwear for Burmese men); bearded faces smiling into clean shaven faces over the same plates of delicacies, *maulvi* delegates making speeches in fluent Burmese quoting the Quran and the Persian poets, these are potent signs of the times. As one of the delegates remarked in his speech – “By looking at this gathering would I be wrong if I were to declare that the freedom of the country is already an accomplished fact.” Because we were not politically wary in the past we were victims of the *divide at empera* policy; after two generations of subjugation with occasional communal ill feelings and riots we ought to have learnt to shun this subtle weapon.

The foundation of unity and freedom has been well and truly laid at Pinyinmana and it now remains for all of us to raise up a superstructure as befits our past glory and future greatness.

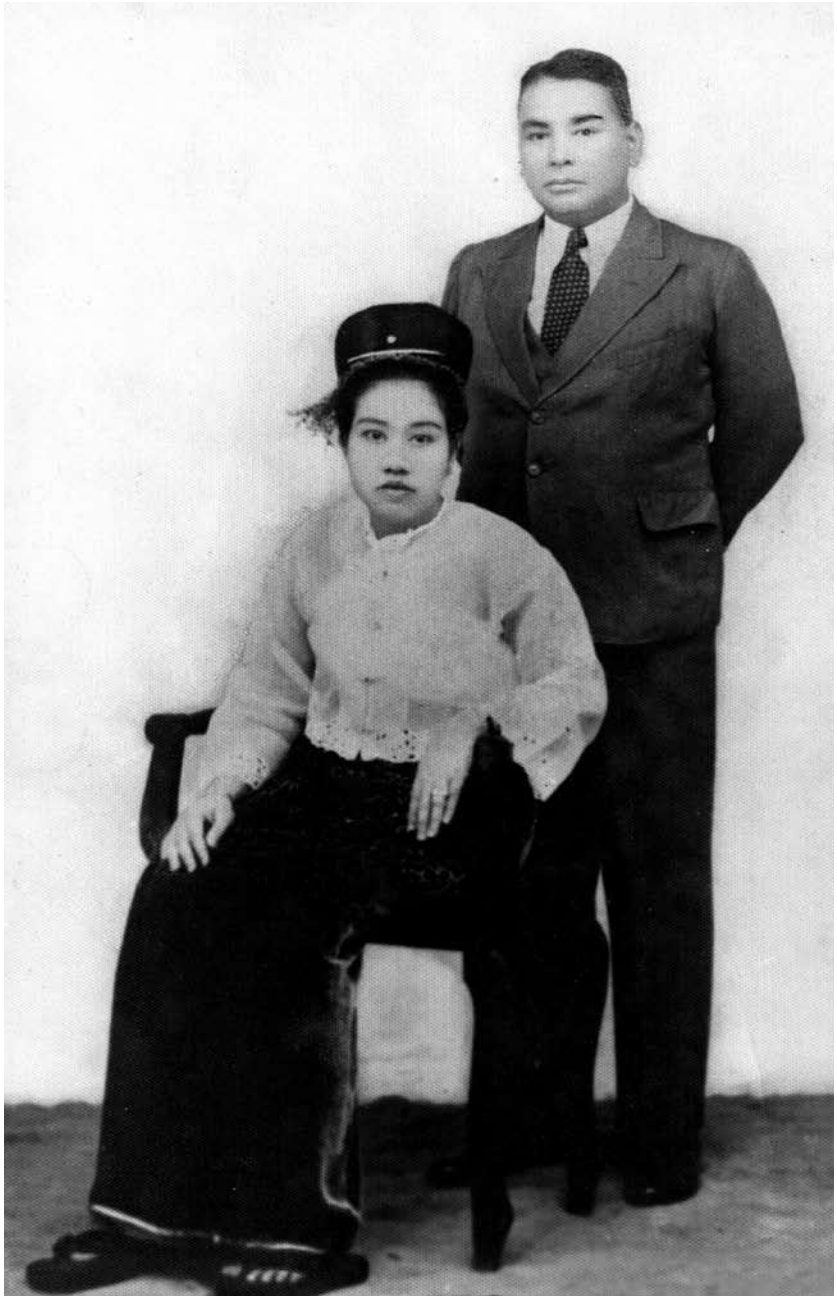




“A team of Mandalay National Central High School boxers and officials who took part in 1937 National School Boxing Championship”



“Mandalay National Central High School Amateur Police Force (Yedat)” 1937



Sayagi U Razak and Daw Khin Khin

Sayagyi U Razak as Retold by His Pupils



*

Selected articles translated into English from a book,
“Sayagyi U Razak as Retold by His Pupils” published in
1995 in Burma/Myanmar as a remembrance of the 75th
Anniversary of the National Day

* Mandalay Central National High School's emblem and the motto: "Atta-Hei-AttaNaw-Nar-Htaw" (in Pali language) can be translated as "I am the one I can respect and count on".

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

This book, “**Sayagyi U Razak As Retold By His Pupils,**” is an English translation of a Burmese book by the same name published in September of 1995 by Mandalay Association on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of the National Day.

The original book in Burmese actually contains twenty-eight articles, each written by a former pupil of Sayagyi U Razak and portrayed Sayagyi (i.e., The Head Master or Principal of a school) from his or her vantage point.

The present English translation only includes ten selected articles, because understandably, description by various writers of a common central figure would inevitably be repetitive. Hence, the selection of articles is made as an attempt to produce the fullest possible profile of Sayagyi's life and character with the least possible repetition.

Though Sayagyi U Razak led the Mandalay Central National High School since 1921, right after the “1920 –University Student Boycott” he expanded the school up to 1942, the beginning of World War II in Burma. Most of the authors of the articles in the present book were Sayagyi's pupils during 1930 to 1942. This is most probably because by about 1995, the time of the first publication of the book, only these authors were at their prime and in good health and still able to recall their fond memories of their past.

In between the time of the first publication of this book in Burmese language in 1995, and the English translation in 2005, some of the authors have passed away. However, in the brief biography of each of the author following the corresponding article, the English translation is made as written in the original Burmese text.

Most of us only know Sayagyi as one of the martyrs assassinated along with Bogyoke Aung San on that tragic day in July 1947. But there was a gentler and kinder side to this Sayagyi, which is revealed in these articles. They allow us to see how truly gentle and humane he was. There were so

many acts of tenderness and kindness in his life, which would have gone on unrecorded but for these writers. I am sure that there were many other little unremembered acts of kindness and love, which we will never know of in this man's life.

On a personal note, working on the translation of these articles has been a joy to me and I just cannot help but admire Sayagyi U Razak. All these writers deserve our gratitude for helping posterity remember Sayagyi as a truly great man. I hope that this book would render a clear profile of Sayagyi U Razak, who was a true patriot and a selfless nationalist with a clear vision and zest for the good of the country and people of Burma (Myanmar).



1. SAYAGYI U RAZAK AND MANDALAY UNIVERSITY

By M. A. Ma Ohn

As the universities and colleges including those of Yangon (Rangoon) and Mandalay reopened, tens of thousands of students streamed back to their campuses. It was most probable they were hardly aware of the immense efforts and sacrifice made by certain individuals at various times so that those students could study in peace and orderliness.

Prior to 1940, college and university education, and various courses in science and engineering, law and teaching, were available only in the city of Yangon. For someone, who could not afford to go to Yangon, it was literally impossible to have any knowledge of such higher learning, let alone complete a course in it. The opportunity to attend such professional institutions seemed to be limited to the people of Yangon and its environs.

As a result of the 1920 Rangoon University Strike, Mandalay Intermediate College came into being in 1924. The college campus at that time consisted only of a single-storey brick building, in which both administration and teaching had to be accommodated. The Principal, A.D. Marshall, commuted 48 miles daily from Maymyo (now Pyin Oo Lwin) to Mandalay. Lecturers residing in Mandalay had to come to the college either in horse-drawn carriages or by bicycles. There were no hostels for female students. Male students had to cramp into the hostels meant for students of the Agricultural Institute.

The subjects for Science combination students consisted of:

English, Burmese, Mathematics, Chemistry and Physics.

The subjects for Arts combination students consisted of:

English, Burmese, Mathematics, History, Pali, and Logic.

That much I can recall.

Upon the completion of the Intermediate level, because of difficulties in traveling, insufficient finances and parents' concern over their children's safety in Rangoon, only a handful of students could make it to Rangoon for further studies for their bachelor and honors degrees.

To be candid, students from Upper Burma to get the taste of what was called Colonial education were years behind those from lower Burma in their academic pursuits for higher learning.

In 1947, after the Second World War, Bogyoke Aung San (Note by translator: General Aung San, father of Noble Peace Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi) formed the Anti Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) Government in Rangoon. Sayagyi U Razak became the Minister for Education and National Planning. Ever since his days as the Principal of the National High School in Mandalay, he had been unhappy with the lack of a university or degree level college in Upper Myanmar, which caused great loss of opportunities for the young people there. One of the very first things Sayagyi did on becoming the Minister for Education and Planning was to form a plan to found a University in Mandalay on July 16, 1947, which will be on par with the Rangoon University, thus raising its status from intermediate college level to university degree level.

The pre-war Intermediate College site and Agricultural Institute grounds had been turned into the hospital complex by the new British Civil Affairs Service (Burma): CAS (B) administration. Everything for the Mandalay University College had to be started from scratch. Sayagyi felt that the Principal and the staff of this college should be from upper Burma so that they would have a better understanding of the need for such a college and be dedicated in implementing it.

Accordingly, U Ko Lay (now retired Vice - Chancellor of Mandalay University) was chosen to serve as the Principal of Mandalay University

College since U Ko Lay hailed from Sagaing, and was also an old student of Mandalay Intermediate College.

There would be hostels not only for the boys but also for the girls. The author, who was a tutor in the Pali Department of Rangoon University at that time, was assigned the responsibility of heading the girls' hostel in Mandalay University by Sayagyi.

At that time, Saya U Ko Lay was not a member of the staff of Rangoon University. He was working abroad as a soil chemist. According to the prevailing rules, the appointment had to be made through the University Council and Senate, and was thus pointed out by some as inappropriate. Sayagyi responded by saying that he had exercised his power to veto as the minister, in view of the acute needs.

Later on, when Sayagyi found out that the author was also serving as the warden of Inya Hall (girls' hostel) in Rangoon and the replacement was hard to come by, he did not want me to be transferred to Mandalay. However, the author was eager to take part as a member of the founding team of Mandalay Degree College despite expected difficulties. It is heartening to see that the College, which we started with about one hundred students including thirty girls, is now thriving and has become a campus of tens of thousands of students. All this was due to Sayagyi U Razak's wisdom and foresight for which we are ever grateful.

Just as Sayagyi U Razak assumed leadership in every aspect in our endeavor for education, he also wanted his pupils to become leaders in their respective fields. His favorite theme which he often uttered to his students individually or in groups was, "Whatever you do in life, don't just follow from behind or be a hindrance at the side, lead from the front! Even if you become a bandit, be the leader. Then only will you be worthy to call yourself alumni of your former National High School of Mandalay and my former student".

Today if you were to look around the country, you would see Sayagyi's old high school students holding responsible positions in all walks of life.

A brief biography of the author

Born of U Kyaw Yar (Shwebo) and Daw Khin (Ava) at Kinsana Mahi Ward, Mandalay on 6 July 1913, M.A. Daw Ohn was the seventh child of eight children.

She matriculated in 1930 from the Central National High School of Mandalay with distinctions in Pali and Mathematics. She passed the Intermediate of Arts from Mandalay Intermediate College in 1933 with distinctions in Pali and Logic. Continuing her education in the University of Rangoon, she graduated with B.A. (Honors) degree in Pali in 1936 and M.A. degree in Pali in 1938, with distinctions.

She served as a tutor in the Pali Department, University of Rangoon from 1936 to 1942 and became Lecturer and later Professor of Pali first in the Mandalay University College and later in the University of Mandalay between 1947 and 1966.

During the Second World War, she was the President of the Women's Section of Burma East Asia Youth league and in 1945 she became the first woman member of the Executive Committee of AFPFL. She had been a member of delegations to China (1952), U.S.A. (1953), and the U.K (1953).

She was awarded the title of Nainggan Gonyi (Second Class) for her contributions to the struggle for independence of the country. Presently, she is residing at Kinsana Mahi in Mandalay. She was called M.A. Daw Ohn to distinguish her from other Daw Ohns as she was an early recipient of a Master of Arts degree.



2. OUR SELFLESS SAYAGYI

By Colonel Khin Nyo (Retired)

I had the chance to meet with our Sayagyi, who was then serving as the Minister of Education in the Cabinet of Bogyoke Aung San, just before I left for Taiping, Malaya. I was to be attached to the British 26th Artillery Battalion to study how artillery battalions and sections were administered. The month was July 1947 and the date was July 16th.

I went to pay my respects to Sayagyi in his office at the Secretariat.

Wishing to create a genial atmosphere, I asked him jovially but respectfully, “Sayagyi, you have been a National High School teacher and even the Headmaster of a National School. You have been most patriotic. Yet you have now taken up golf the game of the English Upper Class. Is it because you have become a Minister?”

At this, Sayagyi retorted instantly “Khin Nyo, you must know that I play golf now because I love my country and want to be helpful”. At that time the Governor was an Englishman and Bogyoke Aung San was the Prime Minister. I can not recollect the details of our conversation but I was sure Sayagyi did not take golf just to impress others.

When I kept reminiscing about what Sayagyi said to me on that day regarding his playing of golf, Sayagyi's words came back to mind. “You yourself were a boxer. Your real character showed up not when you were winning but at the moment when you started to lose. And if you were of lower moral character, you would start using elbows and head which were forbidden. For the sports on which you do not have to spend much money, such a revelation of one's true character is common among ordinary people. But when it comes to expensive sports like golf, the so-called gentlemen, such as top British Indian Civil Servants (ICS), top British commercial and other senior government executives, and Burmese ICS take up, they think themselves as having an impeccable character. However, they reveal their inner characters in more subtle ways. They regard themselves to be of very high moral character and that they are the

best people. But the moment their scorecards indicate that they are losing, they start to show their true colors by resorting to unscrupulous measures. They become ungentlemanly. I play golf not just to win the game but to find out my opponent's true character. When you know a person's true character, you will know how to deal with him. Many people who take up golf are self important and think they deserve the high positions they have attained in the nation. They have hardly learned anything much after being in England except to become snobs." At that time, I did not fully realize the true meaning of Sayagi's words only until much later.

History Professor Dr. Kyaw Thet of Rangoon University once gave me a book which I roughly remembered as the "British Democracy in Asia." In this book it was mentioned that only Ceylon, among all the nations under British rule in Asia, had acquired fairly qualified civil service personnel that might be comparable to the civil service of England. Those administrators in the rest of Asia (under British Rule), especially those in India and Burma had scant knowledge, if at all, of politics, economic matters and social problems facing them. They only knew how to keep law and order and collect revenue to preserve the British Empire. An Indian ICS admitted and supported the statements in that book.

It was widely accepted that the policies directing the economic matters of Myanmar were formulated at the two exclusive English Clubs in Rangoon. I was not aware of any Burmese ICS or BCS who had been known to have made remarkable achievements as ambassadors. As I came to read more, I came to realize how farsighted Sayagi was.

An episode I can never forget took place during the Japanese occupation of Burma. My personal experience showed how selfless and self-sacrificing our Sayagi U Razak was, even when his life was in danger. It was about the end of January or the beginning of February of 1945. It was the time when Major Ba Htoo was about to move his anti-aircraft battery from Mandalay towards Shan State just before the resistance against the Japanese began. I was sent to report to Major Ba Htoo, who was then the Commander of Upper Burma, that the resistance movement against the Japanese would be possible and that the artillery units in Yenangyaung,

Mandalay, Namtu, Sagaing, Ywahtaung, Monywa, and Kalewa should be alerted to that effect. However, at that time I heard no mention of anything about Sayagyi.

When I got to Sagaing-Ywahtaung, the company commander Bo Thein Oo, knowing that I was once a pupil of Sayagyi, informed me that Sayagyi and a group of activist leaders had been arrested by the Japanese at Mingun and were now imprisoned in Shwebo. Major Ba Htoo did not seem to know Sayagyi nor did anybody seem to have given Major Ba Htoo any order to deal with this matter. At Kalewa, I bought a fishing boat and came down the Chindwin River to Monywa. On arriving at Monywa, it was probably the Commandant of Monywa who told me about the order he had received from the high command to rescue Sayagyi from Shwebo Jail. Or perhaps it was on my arrival at Ywahtaung when the artillery company commander Bo Thein Oo informed me about the order to rescue Sayagyi. So, I had to proceed to Shwebo where he was imprisoned.

At Shwebo, I contacted Shwebo U Than Maung, my old schoolmate of National High School, and another schoolmate, U Soe Lin. Both U Than Maung and U Soe Lin were good friends of the Jail Warden. The Warden arranged for us to meet with Sayagyi secretly. We had to enter the jail during off-hours and we met with our Sayagyi.

When Sayagyi saw me in the Japanese Military Uniform with the rank of Captain on my shoulders, I could feel both sadness and happiness on his face. He asked me about my rank and duty in the service and the reason for my coming to see him. Just before I met Sayagyi the Jail Warden had briefed me that there had been a plan to move Sayagyi and the group from Shwebo Jail by riverine route to an unknown destination. We guessed the most possible port-a-motor could dock was Kyaukmyaung from where the group could be transferred on to a flotilla on the Irrawaddy River.

Hence, my plan was to snatch and rescue Sayagyi either on the way if they travelled on land, or at Kyaukmyaung if they travelled by boat. Then, he would be concealed in the barracks of the artillery unit in either Monywa or Ywahtaung. So, to the question of my coming to see him, I

said that we had received an order, probably from Bogyoke Aung San, for Sayagi's rescue and subsequent concealment.

Incidentally, I have to relate here how Thakin Aung San (now Bogyoke Aung San) came to be acquainted with our Sayagi. During the second All Burma Students' Union's Conference held in Mandalay in 1938, Thakin Aung San was introduced to Sayagi by his former pupil Thakin Ba Hein. They not only came to know each other well, but Thakin Aung San was also greatly impressed by Sayagi's patriotism and courage and came to admire him.

It so happened that Pandit Nehru and his daughter Indira Gandhi also attended this conference where Nehru gave a rousing political speech. Hence, I thought that Bogyoke Aung San had probably asked Major Ba Htoo to issue an order for me to rescue Sayagi.

I told Sayagi that the rescue operation would take place in the vicinity of Kyaukmyaung. Sayagi asked me to rescue the whole group. I told him that my order was to rescue him alone but not the whole group. If I attempted to rescue the whole group and failed, I would be court-martialed for failing to accomplish an important assignment given to me.

Sayagi then said, "If you rescued me alone and if I followed you, I would be regarded as a selfish person and a traitor by the group. My name would be tarnished. As it is, my conscience cannot accept this arrangement. So, can't you consider an alternative to save the whole group?"

I told Sayagi that it would not be possible to rescue the whole group. If we did as he suggested, there could be casualties. To conceal so many people in a safe shelter would be also quite difficult as Kempetai (Japanese Military Intelligence) informers were widespread in the countryside. In the attempt to save the whole group, should less important people be saved while Sayagi happened to be among the casualties I would surely face severe punishment.

Then, Sayagi gave me his final utterance, "If the situation is so, do it

this way. I will not accept your rescue arrangement. For the sake of the group, I will sacrifice myself and let the Japanese do as they will. To be killed or tortured, I will be ready. I will not accept the rescue attempt you are offering. By this you have fulfilled your duty and I will stay on to face my fate". With these words and with tears welling in his eyes, he turned and walked away from me and the Jail Warden.

No finer example can be shown to illustrate Sayagi U Razak's courage, integrity and fortitude than that critical moment when he chose not to be saved for the sake of his colleagues. His face, when I looked closely at that time, showed clearly that he wasn't trying to be heroic nor was he thinking of his honor. It was just pure selflessness and the nobility of spirit on his part. It was then that I got a glimpse of his true character.

A brief biography of the author

Born on 14 January 1918, Colonel Khin Nyo was the fifth son of U Po Hla, the head clerk of the Sessions Judge Office, Mandalay and Daw Aye Mai. He was a student at the Mandalay National School from Kindergarten to Matriculation class. After passing the Intermediate of Science, he attended the BOC Engineering College in Rangoon University until the war broke out.

In the Independence Movement, he served in the Burma Independence Army under Bo Lin Yon, and Burma Defense Army under Bo Ne Win. He was promoted to command the Artillery Battalion.

In the post-war period, he continued to serve in the army throughout and retired as a Colonel. He was also given assignment in the government during the Caretaker Government and he also served as a member of the Revolutionary Council in 1962. For his contribution to the Independence struggles of the country and its development he was awarded Independence Mawgun First Class, Nainggan Gonyi First Class and Sithu titles.



3. SAYAGYI DIDN'T CARE FOR HIGH OFFICES

By U Saw Hla (Oriental Condensed Milk)

At the end of World War II, I was living in Mandalay running a condensed milk industry. In my school days I acted as President of the Students' Union of Mandalay National High School. My father had been an elected Member of the House of Representatives from Wunthanu (Nationalist) Party. With such a background I could not suppress my nationalistic political spirit and was ever eager to participate in the movement for national independence, which was taking place all over the country. I was thus carrying on with the condensed milk business on one hand, and at the same time involving myself with the political activities going on around me and was in contact with all the activists.

It was a day in early April 1947 and I was talking politics with my former teacher of Mandalay National High School, Saya U Tun Maung at his shop at Yondaw Quarters when the postman came to deliver a letter to him. He opened the letter which was from U Pe Khin (retired Ambassador) of Rangoon.

At that time the Governor of Burma was Sir Hubert Rance. He formed an Executive Council to govern Burma and Bogyoke Aung San was appointed as the Vice-Chairman of the Council. (It was then not yet called the Cabinet - the Council of Ministers). The Governor also agreed to appoint Bogyoke Aung San's nominees as other members of the Council.

Later the people started calling the Executive Council the Cabinet of Ministers seeing that Bogyoke Aung San himself was leading the group. The Cabinet included Deedoke U Ba Cho, Mahn Ba Khaing (Karen), U Aung Zan Wai (Arakanese), Saw San Po Thin (Karen), Maing Pun Saw Bwa (Shan), Saw Ba Oo (Karen), etc. In the original list, Sayagyi U Razak was earmarked for a ministerial post to represent Upper Burma. But, because there were so many leaders of the AFPFL at Rangoon Headquarters who were eager to participate in the Cabinet that Sayagyi U Razak's name was temporarily suspended out of the Cabinet nomination list.

When the Governor Sir Hubert Rance advised Bogyoke Aung San to expand the Cabinet the second time, Bogyoke Aung San included Sayagyi U Razak's name again in the list. U Pe Khin was in the know and thus wrote to Saya U Tun Maung explaining the events currently taking place in Yangon. U Pe Khin's letter also mentioned that there were others who were jockeying hard at close hand to get nominated and if Sayagyi was dropped again, he and all of us would be blamed by people saying that we had been lax and too unpersuasive that Sayagyi did not get selected. Therefore, we folks of Mandalay, both monks and laymen, should send a letter requesting that a ministerial post be given to Sayagyi U Razak to represent Upper Burma.

When he finished reading U Pe Khin's letter, Saya U Tun Maung turned to me and said that as a fellow who was well-acquainted with the politically-involved monks of Mandalay since the time of my father's political days, I should undertake the duty of rallying support among the monks. I immediately accepted the assignment with zeal. When we considered the names of the Presiding Sayadaws (Head Abbots) who were active in political movements to regain independence of the country and who should be included in writing the letter of request to Bogyoke Aung San, we finally reached consensus to approach the following influential Sayadaws:

- (1) Hanthawaddy Sayadaw, Phayagyi-Taik
- (2) Pyaw Bwe Oat-Kyaung Sayadaw, Phayagyi-Taik
- (3) U Zawtika, President of the Young Monks, Phayagyi-Taik
- (4) U Kalyana, Former President of the Young Monks, Phayagyi-Taik
- (5) Golden Spectacled U Wizayagyi, Sagaing Hills, Kya Swa Chaung Sayadaw (then residing in Mandalay)
- (6) Mya Thein Tan Sayadaw, U Nyanuttra
- (7) Daw Khet Oat-Kyaung Sayadaw
- (9) Khin Makan Sayadaw
- (9) U Kethara (Sayadaw of famous dancer Shwe Mann Tin Maung)
- (10) The Orphanage Sayadaw, U Parama

The above monks were to write and sign a letter of solemn request to

Bogyoke Aung San for the inclusion of Sayagyi U Razak in the forthcoming list of Cabinet Ministers.

As soon as we completed the list, U Tun Maung asked me to carry on with the task. I immediately started on my bicycle to head for the various monasteries where the Sayadaws resided. I met some quite readily, while others were either away down-town or taking the afternoon siesta. After leaving messages at the monasteries concerned about my visit and that I would revisit them again soon, I returned home.

Incidentally, I would like to relate here a little episode which took place on my visit to Mya Thein Tan Sayadaw. This was with regard to the attitude of the politically-active monks of Mandalay towards Sayagyi U Razak. At the time, Mya Thein Tan Sayadaw was residing in the precinct of Setkya Thiha Pagoda in Mandalay. Golden Spectacled U Wizayagyi was visiting Mandalay from Sagaing and was staying with Mya Thein Tan Sayadaw. Among the activist-monks U Wizayagyi was the most senior and experienced. When I explained to them the reason of my visit to them, Mya Thein Tan Sayadaw refused to sign the letter, saying, “Your Sayagyi is a Kalagyi” (Kala denotes an alien from the West or an Indian or sometimes a Muslim).

Promptly, U Wizayagyi retorted, “He may be a Kalagyi but he is much better than most Burmese {in patriotism and nationalistic spirit} just sign the letter”. Mya Thein Tan Sayadaw stared at U Wizayagyi and without any further question, he just put his signature on the letter.

Though Sayagyi was a Muslim, he had wide knowledge of Buddhist Scriptures and Literature. His college studies included Pali as a subject and he frequently visited Shwe Kyaung Sayadaw in front of the Mandalay Palace to study Pali literature from the Sayadaw. He eventually became better in Pali than the student monks residing in that monastery.

Born of a Muslim father and a Buddhist mother, he was very Burmanized in his manners and spirit. When he was teaching, he usually wore a Tavoyan peso (longyi) and an al-pucca jacket. He did not usually

wear a Burmese jacket because he thought it did not suit him. He hated fakes and pretensions.

Here, I would like to illustrate how little Sayagyi was keen on high governmental offices. We learnt that Bogyoke Aung San had sent up Thakin Tha Khin (former Minister) to Mandalay to enquire how Sayagyi felt on having been left out of the list of ministers in the first round. At Mandalay, Thakin Tha Khin put up at U Pe Hnin's house at Malun Ward. U Pe Hnin was then the General Secretary of AFPFL of Upper Burma. When Thakin Tha Khin asked U Pe Hnin about the matter, the latter replied, "The best thing would be for you to find out directly from Sayagyi. As far as I could sense I do not think Sayagyi cared much about being a Minister".

The next day Thakin Tha Khin, accompanied by U Pe Hnin, went to see Sayagyi U Razak and discussed the matter. Sayagyi said, "We participated in this political movement with the sole objective of gaining independence for our country. The purpose never included gaining ministerial posts, even though some monks and colleagues keep pushing me to represent them from Upper Burma in the Cabinet"

After I collected the required signatures from the Presiding Monks and others, I left for Rangoon the next day. I arrived at Yangon about 4 p.m. and proceeded straight to Saya U Ba Hla's house at *Kyauk Myaung* Quarters and decided to stay there for a few days. U Ba Hla was one of my former teachers at Mandalay National High School and had become an administrator in the National Insurance Company. I had been very close to Saya U Ba Hla since my school days and I usually stay with him whenever I came down to Yangon. Incidentally, U Ba Hla was the father of Lt. Col. Ne Win (now retired) and Col. We Lin. He was well known for his superb English teaching. He studied at Calcutta University and joined National School on his return to teach, shunning other better paid jobs. He was also known for his kindness and cordial relationship with all he had to deal with. He was known as 'human shock absorber' as he would bear the brunt of all the complaints of the insurance company, smoothing all the ill feelings of the clients.

In the evening Saya U Ba Hla returned home from office and as soon as he saw me he started enquiring about the situation in Mandalay. I related to him all that took place in Mandalay and the reason for my journey down to Yangon. He then read the letter of request from the Presiding Monks of Mandalay to Bogyoke Aung San.

After reading the letter, he said that we should proceed to see Sayagyi where he was staying. We went in his car to Park Lane where Sayagyi was staying with his friend U Khin Maung Latt (Commissioner of Finance). Sayagyi was then in Rangoon for some other business.

When we got to U Khin Maung Latt's place, we met Sayagyi U Razak and we told him the purpose of our visit. U Khin Maung Latt suggested to Sayagyi to postpone his departure to Mandalay by one more day. As it happened, Sayagyi had already purchased a train ticket for going back to Mandalay the next day.

Sayagyi refused to delay his return saying that he did not want people to think that he cared much for the ministerial post. If there was anything to be done let Ba Hla and Saw Hla worry about it. Saying so, he returned to Mandalay the next day.

The next morning U Ba Hla and I went in his car to Tower Lane near the Kandawgyi Lake (Royal Lake), where Bogyoke Aung San was residing. We met with Bo Tun Hla (writer Tekkatho Ne Win), the Personal Assistant of Bogyoke Aung San at the residence.

When Bo Tun Hla enquired us of the purpose of our visit, we told him that we came to deliver a letter of request from the Presiding Monks of Mandalay to Bogyoke Aung San. Bo Tun Hla said that we could leave the letter with him, but we insisted that the monks command us to put the letter personally in Bogyoke's hand.

So, Bo Tun Hla showed a place for us to sit and asked us to wait for a moment. A few minutes later we heard the sound of army boots coming down the staircase. Then, we saw Bogyoke Aung San in PVO (People's

Volunteer Organization) uniform. At the foot of the staircase, Daw Khin Kyi (Bogyoke's wife) was telling him that something was wrong with the electricity bills as the amount was much more than expected. Bogyoke told her to take along an able escort and to go settle the matter at the Electricity Office.

Then he approached us and asked what the matter might be. Bo Tun Hla explained to him about the letter from the Presiding Monks of Mandalay, and that the monks wanted us to deliver it directly to Bogyoke.

Bogyoke then asked for the letter and as soon as he had it in his hand he entered into his car and started opening it just as his car moved.

Since I had completed my duty, I returned to Saya U Ba Hla's house. That evening the radio broadcast announced that Sayagyi U Razak had been appointed "The Minister of Education and National Planning".

A brief biography of the author

U Saw Hla is the son of a Member of the House of Representatives (Kyaukse), U Sein Ba and wife Daw Pu Pu. He was born in Mandalay on 27 August 1915. He attended Mandalay National High School from Kindergarten to Matriculation class. He was President of the Students' Union of his high school during the All Burma General Strike in 1938.

He actively participated in many organizations of social welfare work such as Mandalay Orphanage School Administrative Committee, Leprosy Patients Aid Committee, and Maternal and Child Welfare Association.

Now, he is one of the patrons of the Old Students Association of Mandalay National School and currently residing at Magwe.



4. AFFECTION JUST AS ONE HAS FOR ONE'S MOTHER

By Pinnie

I unexpectedly became a student of Mandalay Central National High School because my father was transferred to Mandalay. On the first day of my school attendance, I did not have the school uniform: black Burmese jacket and green longyi. So I put on *pinnie* (reddish ochre coloured, locally woven cloth) Burmese jacket and green longyi. On arrival at school, I went to see Sayagyi and asked for permission to wear the only jacket I had for the time being and he approved it with a smile. How glad I was.

Every time we saw Sayagyi, he always smiled back at us. Even when he was holding a cane to punish the students for their misdeeds, one could not see any hint of anger on his face but a grin on his lips. No one could resist the charm radiating from his smiling face and the good-heartedness and no wonder people loved and respected him.

In our matriculation class, Sayagyi taught English and Pali. The English text was about the American President Abraham Lincoln. When he taught English, the pronunciation was like that of an Englishman. He stressed his students to utter words with the correct pronunciation.

Our Sayagyi took keen interest not only in literary matters but also in boxing. He had constructed a boxing ring in the middle of the school compound where the students could go and practice.

To acquire basic military training, he formed the Yedat (“Brave Unit” –Amateur Police Unit) for the students in the school. Sayagyi himself participated in this Yedat Unit as its commandant. On processions, Sayagyi put on his uniform and marched ahead of the whole unit in unison which naturally arouse patriotism and pride in us.

In order for the students to take an interest in politics, Sayagyi formed a Students' Union in the school through which he encouraged them to be more attentive to matters nationalistic and patriotic.

Furthermore, he invited some well known artists of Mandalay to the school to teach the art of drawing and painting to interested students. As I had the inclination for painting, I took part in these art classes. My hobby also included photography and I often visited Sayagyi's house and took the family photos.

In 1940 after I matriculated from Mandalay National High School, I went abroad for further studies and thus I was cut off from my Alma Mater. After the war in 1945, I visited my parents in Bassein, who had just moved back from Sagaing Hills. From them I learnt that Sayagyi had been taken into custody at Mingun (across the Irrawaddy River from Mandalay) by the Japanese and I was most disturbed, sad and worried.

Sayagyi was being watched closely by the Kempetai (Japanese Military Intelligence Unit) and was accused of involvement in the political activities and was finally arrested. First, he was imprisoned in Shwebo and later transferred to Mandalay Jail. He was grilled in the jail to find out his connection with Bogyoke Aung San and Thakin Ba Hein.

While in the Mandalay Jail a lot of Sayagyi's old students came to see him and made various arrangements for his escape. But, because he did not want to endanger his students and their families, he refused to accept their plans. Near the end of the war when Mandalay Jail was hit by bombs, Sayagyi narrowly escaped the raging fire in the jail and many former pupils came to his rescue.

After the Japanese surrendered, Sayagyi went back and lived with his family at his own old house (which escaped fire) near the school. We were overwhelmed when he was appointed as the Minister of Education and National Planning in the Cabinet of Bogyoke Aung San in 1947.

Sayagyi got married in 1938 and the next day after the wedding, he told his newly-wed wife, Daw Khin Khin to observe two things sacred to him. He said to his wife, "In our married life, I want you to observe two things which are sacred to me. One is that you should take great care

not to offend my mother. The other is that you should be careful not to offend my school”.

It was obvious that he had great affection for his school comparable to his affection towards his mother.

A brief biography of the author

Pinnie (alias) Lt. Colonel Tin Aung (Retired), Air Force was born in Myeik on 29 June 1918. He matriculated from Mandalay Central National High School in 1940. Then he went to study radio technology in India.

While in India during World War II he first joined the Indian Air Force and then transferred to Burma Volunteer Air Force and finally to Royal Air Force. He returned to Burma after the war to join Burmese Air Force.

While serving at Mingaladon Air Base, he was sent to the United Kingdom to study aeronautical engineering. He celebrated the first Burmese Independence Day in England.

After returning to Burma in 1949, he served in the Burmese Air Force at Mingaladon and Meiktila bases. He won the title “Zeya Kyaw Htin” in 1961 for his outstanding services. He served as the Chief of Maintenance Department of Mingaladon Air Force Base until his retirement.



5. OUR SAYAGYI U RAZAK

By Thakin Chan Tun

If I claim that our Sayagyi was a visionary patriot, those who did not know him personally might think I am honouring him only because he was my own Sayagyi. Those who knew him well would readily agree with me.

Why could I say that Sayagyi was such a person? It would be obvious by scrutinizing his words and deeds throughout his life. In my younger days I was neither fully aware of Sayagyi's farsightedness nor his patriotism. It was only I gained in years that his outstanding qualities dawned on me.

Despite being a son of a Circle Inspector of Police (an officer under British Rule), he participated in the First Strike of the students in 1920. It was a taboo in those days for the children of government employees to take part in the strikes against the British Government. He founded the Central National High School of Mandalay in 1921 to educate and train young Burmese children. He appeared for his B.A. degree examination held by the Council of National Education in 1922 and on graduation, served as the Sayagyi (Head Master of the School) of the Mandalay Central National High School. He was proud of his B.A. degree from the Council of National Education, always mentioning his degree as B.A. (Nat.).

Sayagyi's patriotism was obvious from the fact that he served as the Head Master of the National School for over 20 years, from 1922 until 1942, when the war broke out. As son of a Government official at the time and being a graduate with a university degree, he could easily have acquired a high governmental position with a handsome salary and many other fringe benefits. Instead he chose to stick to the national school in Mandalay with irregular income collected as fees from students' parents of various means. Some poor students were also exempted from paying fees.

No one had to tell them to be patriotic; he and the rest of the teachers in the school had shown their patriotism by their deeds without any loud utterance. Those who followed in the footsteps of Sayagyi included Wunna Kyaw Htin U Ba Khin, U Tun Maung, U Ba Htike, U Ba Pe Lay,

U Gyi Oh, U Chit, U Tin, U Taw Oo, Saya Ba, Saya Tay, U Aye Maung, Bo Khin Maung Galay, Daw Thike, Daw Hnin Oo, Daw Ma Ma and Daw Than who served as teachers at the Mandalay National School, each with a meager remuneration.

Believing that in the movement for independence, the Myanmar people should have at least some knowledge of basic military training, he formed the *Yedat* (Brave Unit) in the school with himself as its Commandant. When I saw the photo taken in 1937, of the *Yedat*, given to me by my schoolmate U Aung Kyi, my memory played back 57 years. I was sad to discover that all the teachers who took part in the *Yedat* were no longer alive, and my fond memory of them came back to remind me of those pleasant and inspiring days. When I saw my picture in that group photo, I felt very young again. Quite a few of my schoolmates in that picture had passed away already. In the picture U Aung Kyi and Thuriya Ko Than Maung were sitting at the front. Ko Kyaw Win, Ko Maung Gale, Ko Soe Win, Ko Sein Htway, Ko Kyaw Thaug and Ko Tin Ohn had all passed away and those in the picture who are still alive are Ko Ba Shwe (retired Ambassador), Ko Aye Kyaw (retired Captain), Ko Min Maung (retired Director). I have also forgotten quite a few names. In order to acquire stamina and toughening up, Sayagyi frequently led our march to U Pein Bridge in Amarapura and back to Mandalay.

For students to become well rounded he personally encouraged them to take part in sports of one's choice such as boxing, basketball, football, etc. Sayagyi was especially keen on boxing. He recruited Mr. Fisher (an Anglo-Indian Boxing Champion who once gained a Championship title of the British Empire in London) as a coach to train the students. Systematic training by Mr. Fisher had resulted in the emergence of future Myanmar boxing champions like Ko Chit Ohn, *Kyar* (Tiger) Ba Nyein and Myo Thant (Retired Major). Myo Thant was selected to compete in Olympic Boxing Matches held in London, England. San Hla and *Kyar* Ba Nyein also took part in Olympic Boxing Matches in Helsinki (Finland) and Than Tun got selected to compete in Tokyo Olympic Boxing Matches. All these boxers were the pride of the Mandalay National High School, thanks to Sayagyi's farsightedness and encouragement.

Sayagyi U Razak taught English and Pali in 8th, 9th and 10th grades (Matriculation class). When I got to 8th grade in 1937, I became a pupil of Sayagyi. On the first day of my English class, Sayagyi told us that English language had become a universal language. If we knew English well we would have no difficulty in communicating in any country. When we gained independence, we would have to deal with other countries through English language. Therefore he wanted us to put in extra effort to be proficient in English. He advised us to read English publications of all kinds to become fluent in English. He told us that after reading about two hundred books, we would be well on our way.

He also suggested the method of reading. First, we should read the book completely. Then, on the second time, to read the book slowly, marking the words we did not know. Then we should consult a dictionary and write down the meanings of those words. Reading the third time would reveal clearly what the book was about. To get the correct pronunciation we ought to see English movies often. At first we might not understand, but gradually we would pick up the words. Following Sayagyi's exhortation, Ko Ko Gyi (retired Managing Director of State Insurance Company), Ko Mya Than (Manager of the State Commercial Bank) and Ko Chit Swe (who became the Personal Assistant of Sayagyi when the latter became the Minister) became known as efficient in the command of English language. Ko Ba Kyone of Amarapura Township, in order to improve his English tried to learn the whole U Tun Nyein English-Burmese dictionary. Now both Ko Ba Kyone and Ko Chit Swe are no more.

Although Sayagyi suggested that we see English movies I had never seen one yet, as the place I was living was far from the movie theatres. In 1937, I moved in to stay at the house of M.A. Daw Ohn in China Town Quarters of Mandalay.

Now that I had come to live in downtown close to Elphinstone movie house, one day I mobilized six other students to go and see an English movie named "Under Sea Kingdom", shown at 12:30 pm., about the time of our school lunch-break. We naturally missed the afternoon classes. The next day while we were attending classes, the peon from Sayagyi's office

appeared to tell our class teacher U Hla Yi to send the seven students who cut classes to go to the movie house the previous day.

I was in the fore-front entering Sayagyi's office. To the question of where we went yesterday absenting ourselves from classes, I said we went to see an English movie to improve our English pronunciation. He said "Good, but you should visit the movie house only on weekends. Now, you are going to be given rewards for cutting classes". So saying, he gave three strokes of caning on our palms to each of us. This was the first of three times that I got caned by Sayagyi in the National School.

Sayagyi said that after gaining independence we all would have to use written and spoken English to deal with other countries. So we all were asked to speak only in English from the moment we entered the school compound. He kept thinking of the best way to establish a system to put this idea into practice. Finally he found the "Lock Keeper System". The system was that each of the classrooms was given a padlock. If a student was found speaking in Burmese instead of English, he/she would be given the lock to keep. If the keeper could catch another student speaking Burmese, he would hand over the padlock to that person. By this way, the locks kept changing hands in each of the class rooms until 3:30 pm, when the last keeper had to enter Sayagyi's office to receive three strokes of caning on his/her palms.

One evening, I was going up the stairs when I saw Ko Saw Hla (Oriental Condensed Milk), Ko Bya Maung (Insurance Company, Retired) and Hilda Lone (later the spouse of Dr. Kaung Zan of Agricultural Department) coming down the staircase, each holding a padlock in their hands, wearing sheepish grins on their faces. All of us were from 10th grade (Matriculation class).

I jokingly said to them "Oh, You all have to eat *Ngaphawgye*?" (*Ngaphawgye* in reversed Myanmar means *Ngapegyaw*, fried fish) Since I included one Myanmar word in the English sentence, Ko Bya Maung with a big smile, rushed toward me and pushed the lock into my hand saying, "You had just spoken a Burmese word". I had no choice but to take the padlock and received my punishment.

This was how I received my second caning from Sayagyi.

One evening Sayagyi came to our class to teach Pali. Before the lessons, he mentioned that the *Yedat* planned to travel to Shwebo and march to the King Alaungpaya's "Aung Myai" Victory- Ensuring Ground. He enquired of the class whether there was anybody who could not come along and asked them to stand up. I stood up. He asked me in English what the reason was and I replied in English, "I got *phanat-pauk-de* business". At once Sayagyi ordered to hand over the padlock to me. Sayagyi then corrected my English. He said "You should say, "I got blisters in my foot"." When the school recessed in the evening, I had to enter Sayagyi's office to receive my third and last caning of my school life.

Sayagyi always wanted his students to be fluent in English. Sayagyi's good intention and farsightedness became very obvious to me when I was later given the responsibility to participate in the delegations going abroad, and especially when I was assigned as the Ambassador of Myanmar to China and Canada. At those times, Sayagyi's advice was rekindled in my memory and with it a feeling of gratitude and deep respect for him too.

Being a patriot, Sayagyi ordered the whole school to sing "Doh Bama" song every afternoon before the classes were dismissed since the movement of 1938. Now, this song has become the National Anthem of Myanmar and we are proud to think that we were singing the song which was to become the National Anthem.

Sayagyi loved democracy too. Since 1937, Sayagyi asked us to organize a Students' Union in the school. From 6th grade to 10th grade (Matriculation Class) he asked us to elect four representatives from each class to be members of the Students' Union. From among the elected members, we were again to elect the President, Vice-President, and Secretary by secret ballot. This was the way he trained his students to gain experience in democratic practice. By 1938 he expanded the practice, taking the cue from Municipal Council and Parliamentary Elections. The students were to elect the President, Vice-President and the Secretary by direct voting for the Students' Union.

In the election of 1938, there were three candidates for the position of the President: Ko Saw Hla (from Matriculation Class-A), myself (from Matriculation Class-B) and Ko Khin Maung Tint (from 9th grade, later Captain of the army). There was only one candidate for the Vice-President position, Ko Chit Ohn (the well known Myanmar Boxing Champion). For the Secretary post, there were two candidates – Ko Po Zone and Ko Thein Maung (another famous boxer) and Ko Po Zone got elected with the overwhelming majority.

For the position of President, there were heated campaign activities and the whole school including teachers and parents were excited. For my campaign, Ko Than Maung (Mandalay Thuriya Newspaper) brought from his father's press, broad big partially torn sheets of papers on which the art student Ko Tin Aung (later retired Colonel, Air Force) painted and wrote wall posters urging voters to vote for me. Ko Saw Hla's campaign also used wall posters.

As Ko Saw Hla was about six years older than me and also being a repeater in the matriculation class three times, he was better known among the students. Consequently, he beat me by 14 votes in the election for the Presidency.

In December 1938, the arrest in Magwe of Thakin Ba Hein, the President of the All Burma Students' Union (a former student of Mandalay National High School) and Ko Ba Swe (later Primer Minister of Burma, now deceased) led to the third big Students' Strike in the whole of Myanmar. The Students' Strike in Mandalay was centered in the compound of Mandalay National High School with the consent of Sayagyi. He also allowed the lady-teachers of the school to cook meals for the students on strike. The teachers were assisted in their preparation for meals by the students' mothers from different parts of Mandalay. Male-teachers like U Tun Maung, U Aye Maung, Bo Khin Maung Galay (later the Interior Minister, now deceased) etc. also took part to help the students as necessary. Bo Khin Maung Galay even led us in the procession chanting slogans.

Later several students including Ko Aung, an Intermediate College

student and President of All Mandalay Sector Students' Union (an old student of Mandalay National High School), Ko Aung Kyaw Win (Mandalay National High School), myself, Ko Ko Lay (Wesley High School, Mandalay), Ko Kyi Mya (Pauk-Myaing High School), were arrested by the authorities, and jailed for inciting the students and causing public disorder.

At the protest march, the British authorities gunned down the marchers, out of which 17 perished. During the 1938 Student Strike, Sayagyi encouraged all the students to take part in the strike and permitted the teachers to look after the students. It was obvious how great his patriotism was.

While serving as the Minister of Education and National Planning in the Cabinet of Bogyoke Aung San, Sayagyi was assassinated along with Bogyoke Aung San and other national leaders by a group of treacherous elements, on 19 July 1947 at 10:45 am. It was most sad and heart-breaking for us old students of Sayagyi when we heard the unexpected news.

A brief biography of the author

Thakin Chan Tun is the eldest son of U Po Sint and Daw Mya Gyi of Mai Hti Village, Kyaupadaung Township, Myingyan District, Mandalay Division. He was born in 1921.

He matriculated in 1940 with distinction in Pali. He continued higher studies in Mandalay Intermediate College until 1942 when the war broke out. He took part actively in the 1936 and 1938 Students' Strikes and during the latter, he was imprisoned for a year. He also actively took part in the independence movement (against the British) and in the resistance movement (against the Japanese) from Upper Burma. He was awarded Nainggan Gonyi Title First Class in 1980. He resides now at No. 28, 166th street, Tamwe, Yangon, with his family and grandchildren and participates in various social and religious activities.



6. A PARTIAL PROFILE OF SAYAGYI U RAZAK

By Aung Kyi

The Indian man with his ever-present cane

Since 15 May 1932, the day I attended the Kindergarten class taught by teacher Ma Ma Thike, I became a student of Mandalay Central National High School. At the first bell at 9 am, we had to form queues, class by class, in the school compound, and on hearing the second bell, we had to climb up the stairs one class after another to the top floor where the Buddha Statue was. We had to recite our prayers there led by Saya U Tun Maung. After the prayers we all entered our respective classes, group after group. Being from the Kindergarten class, we entered the prayer room first and returned to our classroom last.

While we were queuing up in the school compound we noticed some older students giggling and some rubbing their buttocks while rushing to take their places at the respective classes forming the queue. Following behind them was a plump “Kalagyi” (Kala denotes a Western alien or an Indian or a Muslim) dressed in a white shirt and a green paso (sarong), with a black jacket. In one hand he was holding a Burmese cheroot between his fingers and holding a cane in the other hand. I heard the students whispering that the “Kalagyi” with the cane was Mr. Razak, the Principal.

At first, I was curious why an Indian should become the Principal of a Burmese National school. This was only the curiosity of a Kindergarten student who could not think any better yet. Then, I thought that he must have some unique qualities to have reached the position of the principal of our National school. When I thought of Sayagyi hunting down and caning the older students who were hiding in the latrines and absenting themselves from the morning prayers, I began to realize that although he was a “Kala”, he had a high respect for Buddhism. Then, I started to respect and admire him as a person who had deep respect for religions instead of seeing him as a “Kala”.

Since I was just in kindergarten and Sayagyi taught the higher classes,

there was no opportunity for me to speak to him at all. But there came an occasion when I had to utter Sayagi's name right in the midst of a big audience.

It was in December 1932 or January 1933, when our school presented a concert at the *Yadanapon* Theatre in honour of the Education Minister, Sir J.A. Maung Gyi, who was then touring Mandalay.

I do not remember which student from which particular class participated in which part of the variety show. But, I had to take part in the "Choral Dance of Courtiers" (Nauk-Po'-Yein) performed by the 10-11 year olds of Kindergarten and First Grade classes. I was the leader from the boy's side and Ma Sein Toke was the leader from the girl's side,

It was not really a choral dance. It was more like acting on the words of the song. We had only one week to rehearse in the evenings, coached by Teacher Ma Ma Thike.

The evening of the performance arrived. Ours was the first item to go on the program. Before the curtain went up, Ma Ma Thike pulled me aside and asked me if I could speak a few words to the audience before the dance. When I answered in the affirmative, Ma Ma Thike coached me to say the following words: "We are very young kids and at this age our attention should be only for our studies. We do not know anything about wooing or courting. But our Sayagi U Razak had ordered us, 'You must show your best in courting in front of the Education Minister, Sir J.A. Maung Gyi,' and that is why we have to perform our way of courting just now".

After Ma Ma Thike coached me to repeat these lines for about three times, she signaled to begin the show. When the curtain went up slowly, I saw a huge audience in front of me, the like of which I had never seen before. I was in awe and speechless for a moment, not knowing what to say. The orchestra leader, the famous Sein Beda, sensing the situation, initiated the music by gently beating the small Burmese drums called Pat-Lone. Then, my memory returned and I

smoothly recited my lines which Ma Ma Thike had coached a few minutes ago.

At the end of my speech, there was loud laughter and applause from the audience. Sir J.A. Maung Gyi, sitting in the forefront with the dignitaries and teachers, uttered some remarks heartily to our Sayagyi and I saw Sayagyi smiling back with real satisfaction.

I began to taste Sayagyi's teachings when I got to the 8th Grade. Sayagyi taught us Pali. I had thought that Pali would be taught in Burmese letters of the alphabet, doubling up one on top of the other just like those found in Buddhist scriptures. But, I found out that Pali was being taught using letters of the English alphabet. At first, I was scared to take Pali, but later on, because of the skillful way Sayagyi taught us, I felt at ease with the subject.

When I got to matriculation class, Sayagyi taught us English Paper I, the text books - including prose and poetry. Sayagyi explained the lessons not in Myanmar but in English only. He was so well experienced in teaching both prose and poetry that we understood the lessons without any difficulties.

I still remember vividly the verses of the poem "The Lady of Shallot". The way Sayagyi related the poem, verse after verse, grasped the attention of the whole class so well that the students felt as if they were seeing the story on a screen. We were totally absorbed in the story.

Another poem that I remember being taught by Sayagyi was "An Elegy in a Country Church Yard", which I was not sure, written by Thomas Grey or Thomas Hardy. This poem was not as descriptive as "The Lady of Shallot" but it had a philosophical element in it, just as in Buddhist teachings. While alive, people may be haughty and arrogant because of their positions as ministers and generals and also because of their wealth and influence, but the day they perished, they were nothing but dust buried beneath the Church Yard. The way Sayagyi recited the poem made us all conscious of the message of the poem.

In those days the public opinion of our National High School was that although the school was good in most subjects, it was poor in spoken English. I would readily agree with this. Compared to most missionary schools of those days where most of the teachers and administrators were European nuns and brothers, we had less opportunity to communicate in English as all our teachers were Burmese. To compensate for this handicap, Sayagyi introduced the "Lock Keeper System" in our school to enforce students to speak only in English in the school compound.

In order to escape getting two or three strokes of the cane on the palms from Sayagyi for being a lock keeper in the evening, we all tried to speak English. This greatly improved our spoken English, first of all because we managed to rid ourselves of our hesitancy to speak in English and secondly, any mistake we made was promptly corrected by the teachers who were always around.

To improve our written English, Sayagyi invented another system in 1940. Everyday, matriculation students were assigned to write essays in English. The assignment was to be turned in at 9:00 every morning. Sayagyi corrected the papers himself. If a student made silly and most obvious mistakes such as - "He go to school" or "I will came tomorrow" - etc., that incorrect usage was underlined and a flag put on the side of that line. By 1:00 pm, after lunch break, Sayagyi entered one class after another with the assignment books carried by the peon U Pya. Looking at each book, he called out the name of the student and the student was given two strokes of the cane on the palms for each flag.

Because we were ashamed to be punished in front of the whole class, we made special efforts to improve our written English and to be more watchful to avoid making silly mistakes. We finally succeeded in freeing ourselves from being punished.

Sayagyi's motto was that "Simple English is the best English." He discouraged his students in using superfluous words first to impress people. He liked simple, short and precise language. Although we may not

be able to write flowery English, because of this teaching we were able to write English without elementary errors.

In the academic year 1938-39, there were many disturbances in the whole country because of the students' strike and the Indian/Burmese ethnic strife in which we were all involved. Consequently, we could not study well. As a result, only seven students matriculated from our school that year. I was among those who failed. Sayagyi was most disappointed.

Therefore, he made special efforts to have better results for the 1939-40 academic years. There were monthly tests, which kept us busy with our studies. He also made us read books from the school library. As we drew closer to the final examination to be held in early March 1940, we were given a private study period starting from the middle of February. We were also looking forward to the period of long holidays after the examinations.

All the teachers were busy putting the final touches on their respective subjects for the students. Yet, Tin Mya, San Nyein and I had a sudden impulse to go out and have bread dipped in coconut milk from a Chinese shop owned by the tall *Lumbar*. So, we skipped Saya U Ba Khin's Pali class and sneaked away to the shop. After the snack, we watched for a while a marble game being played by some people in the shop.

When we sneaked back to our seats, Saya U Ba Khin was still carrying on teaching, even during the break period between his class and Saya U Ba Htike's English class. Then, suddenly the school peon U Pya appeared and handed a note to Saya U Ba Khin, who read it out aloud, "The following students are required to see the Superintendent (1) Aung Kyi (2) Tin Mya and (3) San Nyein". We entered Sayagyi's office and lined up before him. Sayagyi asked, "Gentlemen, where did you go?" We replied, "We went to *Lumbar's* shop". Sayagyi said, "This is during the school period and what business did you have there?" We said, "We went there to eat bread dipped in coconut milk as we felt hungry". Sayagyi then said, "Are you full and satisfied now?" We said, "Yes, we are full now." Sayagyi then got up from his chair, feeling the cane in his hand and said, "OK, now to be

even fuller, take this present also." So saying he gave us two strokes of the cane on our palms.

Then, he gave us a long lecture. The final examination was only days away and the teachers were anxiously teaching their respective subjects so that the students would fare well in the examination. Sayagi said that he wished he did not have to punish his students but he had to maintain discipline. There were contemptuous talks in the public about our school, calling it "*Nay-chin-daing* school" instead of "National School" (*Nay-chin-daing* in Burmese means - 'come and go as one pleases, without any order or discipline'). Sayagi was more disappointed when he noticed we were in full school uniform while loitering outside during school hours.

Sayagi finally said, "You all are about to appear for the matriculation examination after which you will continue your education in college. Then, you will hold responsible positions to serve the country. If you are irresponsible and lack discipline like now, what will be your worth? So, you had better be more responsible and try to keep the discipline. Alright, now go back to your class rooms". Just as we started moving out, he wished us every success in our examinations.

When we got back to the class-room, we found out that while we were stealthily climbing back over the fence into the compound, the accounts clerk Daw Mya Tin noticed us and reported us to Sayagi. Since Kindergarten to the Matriculation Class, I had never been punished with even a single stroke of the famous cane and I regarded myself to be a hero. Now, in the final few days of my school life in the National School, I was caught, only to taste two strokes of caning from Sayagi.

However, the matriculation result in 1939-40 academic year improved significantly and there were 22 successful candidates (30%) compared to only 7 candidates who passed the previous year.

Since I began my schooling in 1932, until I matriculated in 1940, I was a student of Mandalay Central National High School throughout my basic education period. To all those teachers, from kindergarten to matriculation

class, who not only taught me all that I have learned academically in those eight years, but also how to conduct myself in my life, I am highly indebted and I pay my deep respect to them here with this article.

A brief biography of the author

U Aung Kyi, born on 9 September 1923 at Shwebo is the eldest son of U Shwe In and Daw Ma Ma Gyi. From Kindergarten in 1932 until he matriculated in 1940, he was a student of Mandalay Central National High School throughout. Then he attended the Mandalay Intermediate College until the War broke out.

After the War, he worked in various capacities: a Post Office clerk, a teacher, a public relations officer and a manager of State Timber Board. He earned his B.A. degree in 1953 and his B.L. degree in 1958.

He is now the Vice-President of Mandalay Association in Yangon and President of the Mandalay Chanthagyi Monastery Charity Society for South Myanmar. He also takes part in other religious and social activities.

Currently, he is residing at No.5, Weizza Nyinaung Lane, Ward No. 5, Mayangone Township, Yangon.



7. JUST LIKE A FATHER

By Thuriya Than Maung

Since I was ten years old and while still studying at SPG Christian Mission School, I had the good fortune to be close to Sayagi U Razak and learn from him. My father, the owner of Mandalay Thuriya Daily, U Tun Yin, and Sayagi were close associates in the national political movement for independence in those days. They discussed what they were to write and what they were to do. Because of their close association, I also became close to Sayagi.

Sayagi used to visit the press in the evenings after school. Sometimes, the two old friends would spend time together at the Railways Restaurant. Sometimes I followed them to the restaurant and while they were talking in the Editor's room, I would sit quietly nearby listening to the matters they talked about. In this way, I came to know about the issues of national politics taking place in those days.

After I finished my 7th Grade examination at the SPG School, Sayagi handed me a set of encyclopedias to browse through. Initially, I could not comprehend what was written, so I just looked at the pictures. When I got interested in some pictures and became curious about them, I would ask Sayagi and he would explain to me with great patience and in great detail.

On completion of the 7th Grade at SPG School (a middle school) we were transferred to another school. A lot of my classmates were transferred either to Wesley or Kelly Mission School. My father sent me to Mandalay Central National High School where Sayagi U Razak was the Principal. At that time, I was only 12 and I could not understand my father's motive, as I only thought of following my classmates.

When I was 15 and as a member of the Executive Council of the Mandalay District Students' Union, I became really active in the General Strike Movement of 1938. Only then did I come to realize my father's motive for sending me to a national school instead of a missionary school.

Sayagyi not only guided his students to be competent in their studies but also to be vigilant in national and patriotic matters. He taught his students to be disciplined, dutiful and selfless. He personally encouraged his pupils to excel in sports.

I have fond memories of the Yedat (Brave Unit) led by Sayagyi himself, and I am proud to have been a member. On procession days, we marched along the main roads of Mandalay. I could still imagine today the picture of Sayagyi, marching in the forefront in his Commandant uniform, sternly but gracefully.

While I was studying in the Matriculation Class, I had a great crush on a girl next door and we soon fell in love. When my father learned about it, he told me to end this relationship as we were still very young students who needed to study more and also learn about life. But it was to no avail to me.

One day, while I was in class, there was a message for me to go and see Sayagyi in his office. He asked me to sit face to face and started lecturing me for a full hour. He advised me that before completing my education, I should not think of matters of matrimony. A teenager still needed a lot to learn about life to grow up, and then only should he contemplate matrimonial matters. A teenager naturally has an easily excitable mind, which should be diverted to his studies as well as social and political activities. He cited a few examples from history to inspire in me the spirit of patriotism. Had I not followed Sayagyi's advice from that day onwards, I would never have become a recipient of the Lut-lat-ye Mawgun Title and Nainggan Gongyi Title.

Subsequent to Sayagyi's advice on that day, I participated actively in student politics and became a leading member of our school's Students' Union, President of the school magazine committee, an Executive Committee member of the Mandalay Division Students' Union. I took an active part in both the 1936 and 1938 Student Strikes as a leader of Mandalay District students. I found out that Sayagyi himself was pulling the strings from behind the curtain in the 1938

movement in Mandalay. Sayagyi himself being a boycotter of the 1920 Student Strike, was ever zealously taking a leading role in all the national movements.

When I matriculated in 1938 after the strike, Sayagyi and my father accompanied me to Yangon to get me registered in the university. The then registrar, U Hla Paw Oo Thet, whose sons and daughters were educated at Sayagyi's National School at Mandalay, was also friend of Sayagyi. They arranged for me to stay at Pagan Hostel.

Sayagyi U Razak was not only a teacher but also a writer. He wrote many articles on national politics in the English newspapers as well as in Myanmar newspapers including the Mandalay Thuriya Daily. Also, the book on "The Events Taken Place in the Burmese Royal Palace" was written by Sayagyi and published by Mandalay Thuriya Press. My father hoped to publish the book, entitled "Trials in Burma", written by the British ICS Maurice Collis, and translated by Sayagyi. Accordingly, he wrote and received permission from the publisher who held copyright of the book.

Sayagyi started to translate the book and it was published, as a serial, in the Mandalay Thuriya Newspaper. When Sayagyi's translation of the first chapter – "The Young Officer from Cameroon Unit", appeared in the newspaper, Ludu Daw Ah Mar requested us to give her permission to translate and publish it from her press. My father and Sayagyi gave her permission. Daw Ah Mar's father U Htin, my father U Tun Yin and Sayagyi were good friends and all U Htin's children were educated in Sayagyi's school. Daw Ah Mar often revealed the fact that she became a writer thanks to the benevolence of Sayagyi and U Tun Yin.

In 1943, Mandalay was being bombed day and night by the Allied Forces, and most of the town people took shelter either in Sagaing Hills or at Mingun Hills. Sayagyi U Razak's family moved to the latter.

As for me, I was young and active as a journalist, writer and as a leader of East Asian Youth League. At the sound of sirens alerting citizens of

the on-coming air raids, I would rush to the bunker dug near the fence wall dividing the neighbour's compound. The daily rush to the bunker, eventually led me to be close to our neighbour's daughter, Mya Mya Than, with whom I later got married.

When my girlfriend asked me to bring my elders and talk to her elders for our forthcoming marriage, following the Burmese custom, I at once thought of Sayagi, since my father had already passed away. I also learnt that Mya Mya Than's father, the Divisional Magistrate U Ko Ko Lay and Sayagi U Razak were also acquainted in Rangoon during their college years in 1919-1922 period.

So, I sent my father's right-hand man U Ba Thein to Mingun with the message of my impending marriage and requested Sayagi to lead and carry out the necessary arrangements as my own elder.

Without any hesitation, Sayagi arrived the same day, braving all the risks of daily bombings. He went over to Mya Mya Than's house and talked with his college-mate of twenty years ago. He and his friend discussed all the wedding arrangements in one meeting.

In 1945, Bogyoke Aung San and AFPFL (HQ) leaders from Rangoon came to Mandalay to form the Mandalay District AFPFL Organization. Sayagi U Razak became the President and Ludu U Hla was the Secretary-General, BCP-Ko Aung Thu and myself from the Socialist Party were appointed Joint-Secretaries. We, AFPFL group from Mandalay, led by our Sayagi, participated actively at the AFPFL Conference held on the Middle Terrace of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda in 1946.

In mid-1946, I returned to Rangoon University to study law. That year, I was elected President of the Students' Union of Rangoon University. Subsequently, I was also elected as President of the All Burma Students' Union (ABSU). By this time, Sayagi U Razak was serving as the Minister of Education in the Cabinet of Bogyoke Aung San. Sayagi as the Minister of Education and his pupil, I, as the

President of ABSU met again to talk about some student grievances.

An invitation from Dr. Malcolm Adiseshiah (later Deputy Director-General of UNESCO) from International Students' Services to send a delegation of Burmese students to the Asian Conference to be held in Madras, India, and to the International Conference to be held in the Campus of Arhus University, Denmark, was accepted by Bogyoke Aung San. Another request was also made by Dr. Adiseshiahto to send a Burmese Minister to the Asian Conference to give a speech, and for this, Bogyoke selected Education Minister, U Razak, to attend. In this way, Sayagyi and I got a chance to be together again at the Asian Conference in Madras.

The presence of Sayagyi at the conference made the Burmese student delegation popular. The delegation from Indonesia and India included only professors, whereas only Burma had sent a Minister to attend this conference. The two professors from Indian delegation, Dr. Zakir Hussain and Dr. Radhakrishnan, both later became Presidents of India.

Sayagyi U Razak returned home after delivering his speech at the Conference. We, members of the Burmese delegation, went to send Sayagyi off at the airport happily wishing him a good journey home, without realizing that this would be our last farewell.

On 19 July 1947, Ko Maung Maung Kyaw and I were attending the Denmark International Students' Conference. As Burma is six and a half hours ahead of Denmark, we were still in bed at the time when Bogyoke Aung San and his ministers were assassinated in Rangoon.

On our way to breakfast hall, terrible news from home reached us. Ko Maung Maung Kyaw and myself could not utter a word but wept. All the newspapers in Denmark had all their headlines in bold letters filled up with the news of the assassination in Burma.

At the Conference hall also there was a two-minute silence in honor of and respect for the fallen leaders.

This article is an attempt to present the portrait of my Sayagyi as I saw him and with it I pay my deep respect to him.

A brief biography of the author

Thuriya U Than Maung, B.A,B.L., Nainggan Gonyi Second Class, is the son of Thuriya U Tun Yin and Daw Thet Su, born on 6 Feb. 1924. After passing the 7th Grade from SPG Mission School of Mandalay, he joined the Mandalay Central National High School. He matriculated in 1939 with distinction in Pali. He received his B.A. degree in 1946 and his B.L. degree in 1967.

On the demise of his father in 1942, U Than Maung took charge of his father's Thuriya Newspaper.

In 1946 while attending the B.L. class in Rangoon University, he was elected President of both the Rangoon University Students' Union and All Burma Students' Union. As a student leader, he traveled to India, Denmark, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia for seven months.

After returning to Mandalay, he became a communist and went underground in 1949. He returned to the legal fold in 1956. As a journalist, he traveled to Britain, Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong and China.

In 1962 U Than Maung closed down his newspaper business and became a manager of People's Medical Store. Since 1986, he has worked as an advocate. He is currently residing with his children and grandchildren at No.12, Mogaung Road, Yankin Township, Yangon.



8. OUR MARVELLOUS SAYAGYI

By Maung Maung Mya

It was around the Thirties. The place was in the office room of the Principal of Mandalay Central National High School. It was about 10:00 in the morning. The Principal Sayagyi U Razak was looking at the two persons sitting across his table. One was a teenage student, Maung Chit Tun and the other was the student's uncle, U Pe Hnin.

Sayagyi asked what the matter was. U Pe Hnin the uncle explained that his nephew had been playing truant lately and could not be controlled anymore and that they had decided to seek help from Sayagyi.

Sayagyi stared at the khaki-uniform clad lad and asked, "Is it true that you have been cutting classes?" Chit Tun admitted that it was true. Around 1930s, most teenagers were truthful and were honest unlike the ones nowadays. The fear of their elders made them attend classes regularly.

Sayagyi thought over the matter for a minute and then said, "It is not a good habit to play truant, especially at your age. You should attend classes regularly and try to pass the class examinations well so that you could become a Township Officer like your father." He continued to say, "You must attend school regularly. In case you feel like you want to cut classes, you must come and see me. But, I advise you to attend school regularly." Then the two asked for permission to leave.

From that day on Chit Tun attended school regularly. About a week later, he felt like cutting classes again. For a time he tried his best to control his feelings. But then he could not control himself anymore. So, he decided to cut classes. Suddenly, he remembered Sayagyi's words about coming to see him whenever he felt like cutting classes.

Sayagyi had said so as an encouragement for them to speak out when the need for it arose. This was because at that time there was an atmosphere of anti-authority sentiment.

So, Chit Tun tried to get permission from his class teacher to go and see Sayagyi. When he got to the site of the drinking-water pots, he tried to peep at Sayagyi's office room to make sure if he was at his table. Then, without saying a word to the old peon U Shoon or to the school clerk U Ba Kyaw, who were seated in front of Sayagyi's private office, Chit Tun dashed straight into Sayagyi's room.

Sayagyi was absorbed in his office work until he felt someone's presence in front of his table. Sayagyi looked up and saw Maung Chit Tun. One remarkable quality of Sayagyi was that, out of over a thousand students in the school, he could remember each individually.

As was his custom, Sayagyi took off his glasses and stared at Chit Tun and asked, "What is the matter with you now?" To that Chit Tun replied, "I feel like staying away from classes today." At that, Sayagyi grimacingly said "What did you say? Come on, please repeat it." The young Chit Tun explained, "I want to stay away from classes. Sayagyi, you told me last time to come and see you if I had an urge to play truant." Sayagyi said "O.K. If you want to play truant, go and fetch your books."

When Chit Tun reappeared with his books in his office, Sayagyi asked the school clerk, U Ba Kyaw to get a horse-drawn carriage. The carriage driven by a turbaned Punjabi arrived and Sayagyi took Maung Chit Tun by the hand and walked to it. As Chit Tun's house was not far from the school, Sayagyi asked the carriage driver to drive at a leisurely pace and make a big roundabout from Zegyo Market Clock Tower and the business center before dropping the lad at his house at Malun Quarter. Then Sayagyi took three annas (1 anna equaled 1/16 of a Rupee) out of his pocket and gave it to the driver. Sayagyi told Chit Tun to take care just as he closed the carriage door. (In those days a huge packet of fried noodles with a lot of meat cost only two annas – just to give a measure of the value of money).

The carriage drove past leisurely as instructed while Chit Tun sat excitedly in it. Then it finally came to a halt in front of his house. When the elders at home glanced out and saw a horse-drawn carriage (a gharry) halting in front of their house with young Chit Tun smiling and getting out from it, they were

astonished as it was still during school hours. Maung Chit Tun was bragging about the whole thing while the elders listened quietly. Then, he said that just before the carriage had left the school, Sayagi asked him to attend classes regularly, starting from the next day, which he promised he would do.

The next morning Maung Chit Tun got up early. His parents were in awe, watching their son preparing to go to school. Maung Chit Tun got to school earlier than usual. He loitered a bit in front of Sayagi's office just to make Sayagi notice that he had followed his instructions to attend classes. Sayagi acknowledged his presence by smiling at him. After that, Maung Chit Tun behaved well and attended classes without any interruption for some time and could often be seen near Sayagi's office before school began in the morning.

However, two weeks later the urge came upon him to leave classes to go home. As usual, he asked permission from his class teacher to let him go out for a minute. He walked back and forth near the drinking-water pots to see if Sayagi was in the office. He noticed that Sayagi was not in. He returned about 45 minutes later to find Sayagi at his table. As usual, without asking for permission from the school peon U Shoon or the clerk U Ba Kyaw, Chit Tun dashed into Sayagi's office.

Sayagi asked him, "Hey, Chit Tun, what are you doing here?" When Chit Tun said that he felt like skipping classes today, Sayagi suddenly stood up and pulled out his handkerchief from his trousers pocket. Then he pulled out some papers. He continued to search from his shirt pockets and only a single anna-coin came out. Then, he frantically searched through his trouser pockets. Another anna-coin came out. Putting down the 2 anna-coins on the table he looked really disappointed. Sitting back in his chair, Sayagi, with a miserable look on his face, looked squarely at Chit Tun and uttered, "Chit Tun, as you have witnessed yourself, I only have 2 annas. What we need is 3 annas to pay for the horse carriage. So, you'd better not leave classes today. Come again next time when you want to cut classes. But, for now, go back to your classroom."

Maung Chit Tun felt sorry for Sayagi for not having even three annas

to pay for the carriage fare and he went back to his classes. He attended his classes regularly for the next couple of months. Attending school continuously gradually diminished his desire to run away from classes.

However, this urge suddenly reappeared one day in Maung Chit Tun. As before, he went straight to see Sayagi, who knowing the reason, started searching his shirt pockets and trousers pockets for some moments and finally found but one anna. Sayagi said, “Chit Tun, as you see it yourself, I have only one anna. I just spent some money at the tea-shop on a cup of tea and a cake. So you’d better go back to your classes once again.” Maung Chit Tun obeyed Sayagi and went back to his class room.

It continued in this way until Maung Chit Tun finally got rid of his bad habit and became a regular student.

Maung Chit Tun later grew up to be none other than the well-known boxer Chit Ohn and later became the Divisional Sports Officer U Tin Htut.

A brief biography of the author

U Maung Maung Mya is the son of U Hla Baw (Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioner) and Daw Kyaw.

He started his education in the Mandalay Central National High School since 1930 and matriculated in 1941. He continued his studies at the Mandalay Intermediate College up to the senior class of Intermediate of Science when the war broke out. He worked as a Police Officer during the war. After the war, he worked as a reporter, as an editor and later as a contractor.

He worked briefly as a relieving teacher in the Mandalay National School before taking over his parents' Myanmar traditional Medicine Practice. He is currently the President of the Malun Rice Charity Association at Mandalay.



9. IN FOND MEMORY OF SAYAGYI U RAZAK

By Colonel Wai Linn
(Deputy Director, Armored Division)

When Sayagyi was the Principal of the Mandalay Central National School, I was just a 2nd Grader in teacher Daw Ma Ma's class. As Sayagyi taught only the high school classes, I was still a long way from becoming his pupil. However, since my parents and Sayagyi were as close as relatives, I got to know him very well.

I knew Sayagyi's mother and his siblings very well. Sayagyi married late and so his three children were even younger than myself. We called Sayagyi's eldest son (Ko Tin Myint) Myint Myint, the youngest son (Ko Hla Kyi) Ah KyiLay (little Ah Kyi) and the middle child, a daughter (Khin Khin Sein), Sein Sein. Although we don't get to see each other very often, the two older ones and I are like siblings whenever we meet but we have not seen the youngest son for quite sometime now.

I started my schooling before the war at the Mandalay National High School. My kindergarten teacher was Daw Thike and First Grade teacher was Daw Than Than Myint. The school uniform for boys was a dark green *paso* (sarong or longyi), white shirt and black Myanmar jacket and for the girls it was a dark blue skirt (Burmese *btamein*) and white blouse.

We could spot Sayagyi in his school uniform even from a distance. He was a bit stout and with a paunch. Other teachers from our school like U Ba Khin, U Ba Pe, U Tun Maung, U Aye Maung Lay, U Khin Maung Galay and U Ba Htike were trim. But teacher U Ba Kyu, like his elder brother Sayagyi, was a bit paunchy.

The moment they sighted Sayagyi from a distance, most of the students shied away. But I regarded Sayagyi as my own uncle and was not intimidated by him. When Sayagyi came nearby, I just stood by with folded arms and he would pass by smiling at me.

Sayagyi's office was behind the north-side entrance gate near the school's drinking water pots to which we would go every morning to wash away the *thanakha* (a domestic facial make-up) which our mothers had put on our faces before leaving for school. If Sayagyi saw what we were doing, he did not say a word but looked at us smilingly.

My mother referred to Sayagyi as Ko Ko Gyi (Big brother) and to Sayagyi's wife as Ma Ma Khin (elder sister Khin). She told us to call Sayagyi, Oo Lay Gyi (Big Uncle). But somehow I always called Sayagyi (head teacher) as only "Sayagyi".

Some people referred to our school as "*Nay-Chin-Daing* School" (the school where people come and go as they please, a school without discipline) instead of "National School". It was not true to say it was a school without discipline. In fact it was very strict.

Although our school was a National School everyone had to speak in English during the school period. A student caught speaking in Burmese would be given by the class teacher a padlock to keep. The keeper of the padlock had to catch another student speaking Burmese to transfer the lock to him/her. The last keeper of the lock for that day would be punished with three strokes of cane on the palm. Sayagyi wanted us to be able to speak, read and write English well. He disliked British imperialism but he encouraged his students to be fluent in English because it was becoming a universal language. Sayagyi was so farsighted.

Boxing was the most accomplished sport of the Mandalay National High School. The boxing coach, Mr. Fisher - a foreigner, hired to teach boxing to the students. A boxing ring was arranged on the second floor of the school building, where interested students could practice in the evenings. Boxing is not a team sport but an individual one. It requires courage, ability to make instant decisions, skill and stamina, while inculcating alertness. Only an individual with a combination of these qualities can become a good boxer. I believe Sayagyi wanted to equip his students with these qualities.

In my younger days, Ko Chit Ohn, Ko Thein Maung, Ko Than Naing, and Ko Bo Yee were famous boxers among the older students. After the war, when Ko Ba Nyein won the Ceylonese Boxing Championship held on the west side of the Mandalay Palace moat, Sayagyi was so proud and kept talking about this match for days. I remember going to see that particular boxing match together with Sayagyi's brothers Uncle Kyaw and U Ba Thaw.

Then we had a para-military unit formed in our school called "Yedat" (Brave Unit). We were members of that unit. Our uniform consisted of green shirts and khaki shorts. There was also a military band in the Yedat which played martial songs. Ko Ba Sein was a member of the band. This unit was formed to train students to be able to work in a team with discipline. On special occasions like National Day, we marched along the streets of Mandalay. My favourite person was Ko Ba Shwe (Retired Colonel and Ambassador) who would participate dressed like the famous Burmese General "Maha Bandoola".

In our school there were national political movements, which I was too young to understand at the time. On one occasion there was a school alarm summoning all the students to the assembly hall upstairs near the boxing ring. There were people standing in the boxing ring making speeches. I was too young to understand what they were saying. At the meeting, arm-bands were distributed among the students and I noticed my elder brother Ko Tin Aung (Retired Lt. Colonel Nay Win) receive one of those arm-bands.

I could not comprehend what the speeches were about, but I remember one ardent speaker all of a sudden trying to catch his falling paso (longyi or sarong) just as he was giving his fiery speech. I found out later that this particular fiery speaker was the student leader named Aung San, later to become our beloved Bogyoke Aung San. Sayagyi certainly encouraged his students to participate in the national movement for independence.

Immediately after the war, our family moved back to Mandalay from Pathein. We found the whole of Mandalay burnt and razed to the ground.

First we put up together with Ma Ma Ni (then the fiance of Colonel Khin Nyo) for a couple of weeks at the Gwegyo Taik Monastery. Then we got into contact with Sayagyi's family and he invited us to come and stay with them in their 3-storey building on 83rd street. We resided with Sayagyi's family for about five months and it was during this period that I got to know more about him.

While we were living with Sayagyi in the same house, Bogyoke Aung San and the group came to visit Mandalay and put up at the same 3-storey building. As far as my memory goes, Thakin Than Tun and Pyawbwe U Mya were also in that group. Bo Tun Hla was also there. Because he was handsome and dressed smartly, we were very much impressed by him.

Our old acquaintance from Patheingyi, *Thanmani* (stainless steel) Ko Maung Maung and the BCP leader who died underground, Sagaing Ko Htay, also came to see Bogyoke Aung San and the group. They were the VIP's of the day, but then, it being the immediate post-war period, these people could not be given the proper facilities they deserved. There was even no electricity supply yet and hence lighting had to be arranged by using high-pressured kerosene lamps. Only simple meals were served on a long table.

Sayagyi did not prohibit us children from being close to the special guests. We children were nearby when Bogyoke Aung San and Sayagyi and other guests were discussing important matters of the country. As long as we did not disturb them or make any noise, we were not restricted. That was another fine quality of Sayagyi who would not restrain children if they behaved.

While Bogyoke Aung San and the group were still in Mandalay, a meeting was held one night in the building. It was attended by about 30 or 40 people. Ludu U Hla, Daw Ah Mar, Daw Ohn and Daw Marlar were among those who attended. We kids were there, nearby. I remember one particular remark made by Bogyoke Aung San. He advised the people at the meeting to speak out frankly if they were unhappy with something instead of hinting or signaling to one another. Bogyoke must have noticed

someone signaling (toe-scratching or foot-tapping one another's leg) to another saying something. After the meeting I heard my mother and Sayagyi's wife praising Bogyoke Aung San's candor and sincerity.

Sayagyi rarely spent the whole day at home. In addition to his school duties, he seemed to be burdened with a lot of other responsibilities. Later we moved to another house and Sayagyi's family also moved to the neighbourhood of their own pre-war house. From there, Sayagyi moved to Rangoon when he was appointed Minister of Education and National Planning.

I had a chance to see Sayagyi on the 18th of July 1947 at the Secretariat (now the Offices of Ministers). I was a member of the Mandalay Boxing Group coming down to Yangon for a competition. The group consisted of Kyah Ba Nyein, Ko Myo Thant (Retired Major), Ko Khin Maung (Dr. Khin Maung), Ko Tint Aung (Dr. Tint Aung), Khin Maung Pu, Maung Maung Khin and myself. Since our arrival in Rangoon, Sayagyi had ordered his personal assistant U Chit Swe to look after us. We entered the Ministry compound without any difficulty and waited in the office room of U Chit Swe for a while.

When Sayagyi returned to his office, we entered his room. We saw Sayagyi in European dress. As soon as he saw me, he enquired if I had a chance to meet my eldest brother Ko Tin Aye (Advocate U Tin Aye) who left for England to attend the Scout Jamboree. Then he asked about my body weight and told us to fight well. He told U Chit Swe to look after our needs during our stay in Rangoon. He also informed us that he would be attending the boxing matches tomorrow evening (19.7.47), scheduled to be performed in the compound of Myoma National High School in Dagon Township. That was our last meeting with Sayagyi.

We are deeply indebted to our beloved Sayagyi. The Mandalay Central National High School he founded played a glorious role in the history of the independence movement of Burma, and the founder himself played a significant role in history. As for myself, I wish the background of Mandalay National High School and its Founder and Principal were made

better known to the general public in addition to what has been written by Ludu Daw Ah Mar and Dr. Khin Mg Nyunt.

When we were living together in Sayagyi's house in Mandalay, we were still too young to know his vision, his philosophy and his endeavors to instill patriotism and nationalism in his students and the people he came to be in contact with. Now that we are of the age to understand all these, Sayagyi is no longer with us. Hence, I feel that those who had the chance to get into close contact with him during his active days should record more than what has been done so far.

A brief biography of the author

Colonel Wai Linn is the fourth son of Thiri Pyanchai U Ba Hla, a former teacher of Mandalay National High School, and Daw Kyi. Born in Mandalay before the Second World War, he started his schooling in the National School, Mandalay. He also attended Patheingyi National High School and Rangoon Myoma National School.

He was selected to attend the Military Officer Training School in 1956 and had served in various infantry and armored battalions and military training schools. Presently he is serving in the Directorate of Artillery and Armored Divisions, in the Defense Ministry.

He started writing articles and translations since 1952 in the Myanmar Women Magazine with the encouragement of writer Yuwadi Khin Oo.



10. U RAZAK AND I

By Theikpan Hmu Tin

The fact that I had studied basic English for three years (from the first to third grade) under an English lady teacher in Mogok Government Middle School later facilitated my skills in reading and speaking English. Then at Katha, from the fourth to the sixth grade, I also found learning English quite easy under the skilled teaching of U Ba Thaung and Sayama. After that I attended the seventh grade at Kelly School in Mandalay and the eighth and ninth grades in Myitkyina.

During my three-year sojourn at Myitkyina, I took part as President of the Students' Union in the Student Strike of 1938. Observing my activities in the Student Movement, the English teacher Saya Solomon invited me to his house one day. Saya Solomon was the younger brother of the former Adjutant General of the Defense Department, Colonel Solomon. Saya Solomon invited me to his home for dinner and told me that he expected me to carry out deeds that would benefit the country.

In order to be effective in one's endeavor in the service of one's country and of oneself, one would need to master a foreign language. Saya Solomon said to me that in any country, the greater the number of those who had a mastery of foreign languages, the faster would be the rate of its development. Since then, he coached me intensively in spoken and written English for the next three years. In those days, there were many Indian students attending Myitkyina High School and I communicated with them in English, not Hindi.

While I was acting as President of the Student Union in Myitkyina High School, I was summoned one day by the District Commissioner (D.C) to his office. I arrived there and was treated to tea and cakes. Over a cup of tea, the DC explained that he was not English but Irish. The Irish people had revolted against the English rule and gained Independence for Ireland. He felt that the Burmese people's struggle for independence against British rule was justified and wished its success. But he also suggested that while I continued my active role in the movement, I should not forget my studies,

as educated people were needed for the development of the country.

After I completed my ninth grade, my father was transferred to Mandalay. I attended my tenth grade at the Mandalay Central National High School. On the first day of my school attendance, I encountered Sayagyi U Razak. He asked me in English my name and the towns from which I had come. Thanks to the good teachers I met at Katha and Myitkyina, I could answer Sayagyi's questions fluently in English.

Sayagyi seemed quite impressed with the way I expressed myself in English. He might have mistaken me as a Matriculation grade repeater instead of one who had just passed the ninth grade. So, I was placed in the class for exam repeaters. On the first day of school and a moment before the school bell rang for evening recess, an older student asked me in Burmese how I would return home after school. I naturally replied in Burmese that I would go home on foot.

Suddenly, that student dropped a big padlock on my desk. When I enquired the reason for his deed, he told me to return the lock to Sayagyi's office. On approaching Sayagyi's office I noticed students coming out of Sayagyi's room rubbing their hands on their buttocks for what they were worth. Only then did I come to realize that I had been tricked.

On arriving at Sayagyi's room, he told me in English to put the lock on the table and turn the other way. Then he gave me five strokes of the cane on my buttock. When I enquired in English the reason for this corporal punishment, he asked me in Burmese to sit down. Then, he gave me a long explanation of the whole thing. He said that the National High School was established because of resentment against British Rule. The British wanted to exploit the Burmese people and it was up to us to resist them by any means: military, economic, social or educational.

He continued to explain that in order to fight effectively against the English people one must be fluent in both spoken and written English. To be fluent in the language one needed a lot of practice. To acquire good practice, the National High School had made a regulation that only

English be spoken during school hours for all students from the first grade to the Matriculation class. This of course excluded the period in which Burmese was taught.

Each class monitor had to go and take a padlock from Sayagyi's office every morning. The monitor's duty was to try to catch any student speaking in Burmese. On finding such a student, the padlock would be transferred to him. Then this student would have to keep the padlock until he could catch another student, to whom he could transfer the lock. This would go on as the day progressed, as any student who held on to this padlock did so at his own peril. Thus, it was incumbent that any person getting the padlock quickly and desperately get rid of it as soon as possible. The last one holding the padlock would have to enter Sayagyi's office to receive punishment. Only then did I realize that on the very first day of school, I had become a victim of Sayagyi's lock-keeper system.

From that day on I came to be closely acquainted with Sayagyi. He often asked me to speak in English in class. At one time I used the word "Grub" for the meal and he corrected me saying that although it was correct, it should not be used in formal statements, as it was slang. In those days, only my friend Tin Ko Ko and I took Additional English course for our Matriculation Examination.

Sayagyi permitted me to continue in my underground activities which I had started while I was in Myitkyina, under the guidance of Saya U Khin Maung Galay and Thakin Tin Mya. I became the trumpeter in the band group of the school's Yedat. Because of my participation in the scout group in Katha and in the Yedat in Mandalay National School, I was experienced in discipline and drill matters when I joined the Burma Independence Army (B.I.A.)

At the time B.I.A. was re-organized to B.D.A. (Burma Defense Army), all the recruits were lined up for selection. Two officers of the Thirty Comrades (Japan Returnees) walked passed the line of recruits inspecting each one thoroughly. Because of the way I stood at attention (many thanks to my previous experiences in the scout and Yedat), I was picked and appointed sergeant outright.

The winds of war were blowing stronger and even Singapore was about to fall. I reckoned that our matriculation examination may not be held at all. But the examination fee of 10 Kyats was still being collected in our school.

So, I went to see Sayagi and told him that there was no possibility for the matriculation examination to be held at all and to exempt me from paying the examination fees. Sayagi asked me what made me think so. I told Sayagi what I had gathered about the situation and war news and he accepted my explanation. But, he warned me that if I did not make the payment for the examination fees, he would have to scratch my name out of the register. I agreed to that, but I requested him to allow me to attend classes as long as the school was opened. As Sayagi knew that I was conducting some underground movements, he readily allowed me to continue classes.

Soon the war reached Burma and we all became war refugees. When the Japanese Air force bombed Mandalay on 3 April 1942 for the second time, our National High School was hit and destroyed. I joined the B.I.A. and then the B.D.A. before I was selected to attend the First Group Mingaladon Officer's Training School. Later on, I was further selected to attend the Imperial Military Academy in Japan. I returned to Burma after the war.

One day, it dawned upon me that with the military education that we received in Japan, we should form a body-guard unit to protect Bogyoke Aung San. However, we were not able to accomplish what we had wished to do. Soon, I was selected to become a second lieutenant and posted to join the Fourth Burma Rifles Battalion stationed at Pyay.

One day, while in Rangoon, I made a courtesy call on our beloved Sayagi, now a Minister, at the secretariat. With his usual smile he welcomed me heartily. He asked me how my life had been since we last met as student and School Principal some years ago. I told him all that had taken place with my life during the intervening period.

Just as I was bidding farewell, Sayagi suddenly remarked that all the matriculation grade students in the whole of Burma lost their examination fee of 10 Kyats each and I was the only exception. I listened to his remark

smilingly and then I saluted him solemnly. I never knew that that would be my last salute to him.

When Sayagi, along with our beloved leaders, was assassinated, I was attending a military engineering course in India. However, on my return, I had a chance to pay my respects to them at the Jubilee Hall. As I had noticed long before, security arrangements for the leaders were really inadequate. Even though I had hoped to offer my service as a body-guard to Bogyoke Aung San with the military knowledge that I had acquired in Japan, I did not have the chance. Every time I thought about that great tragedy and the great loss to the nation, it made me very sad.

Thanks to Sayagi's guidance, I was able to serve the country in my own capacity and I will ever be grateful to him.

With this article I pay my homage to my Sayagi U Razak and all the fallen martyrs.

A brief biography of the author

Born of U Lay Maung and Daw Saw May in Mogok and brought up in Katha, Myitkyina and Mandalay, Theikpan Hmu Tin participated in the 1938 student strike as a student leader in Myitkyina and later in the student movements in Mandalay.

Served in the B.I.A., B.D.A., P.V.F. and Burmese Armed Forces for 23 years. Trained in the first batch of the Mingaladon Officers Training School, Japanese Imperial Military Academy first group, Mingaladon Staff College 6th group, Indian Military Engineer College 8th group.

Retired in 1964 as a Major. Since 1965, had written several books on science. Was awarded Naingan-Gon-Yi First Class and Maw Gun Win First Class. Also in 1991, received an award from WHO for his writing against smoking.



**“The fight for liberty is the fight for peace.
And like peace, liberty is indivisible.”**

U Razak

June 1947



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